A Note from the Rector

This is the most unusual Easter season I can remember. While the lectionary is all about new life, we feel like our world is crashing down around us. How can we be talking about joy when there is so much disruption, illness, suffering, and death going on around us?

Every day we hear about the increase in infections and the rising death toll, the struggles people are having to make ends meet and stay healthy, the tug of war between physical and financial survival. Many people ask how the gospel can possibly be relevant right now, especially with the focus on the resurrection in this Easter season.

Well, there are many ways, but probably the most important for us to remember right now is that there is no resurrection unless there is first death. We are afraid, because what if this is the end of our lives, or at least our lives as we know them? Well, what if it is?

Jesus reminds us that life may be transformed, but it is never defeated. Death only wins if we hand it power it does not possess. It has the power to cause us pain through the loss—in this world—of our own lives and the lives of those we love. But death does not have the power to make us less than we have been created to be unless we choose to give that power to it. We are called to discern what laying down our lives for one another really means. Sometimes it means showing up to the ER every day and risking infection to try to save the lives of the sick. Sometimes it means staying home and being one less person likely to become infected and infect others. Sometimes it means not being together so that we slow the rate of infection and save lives. Sometimes it means maturing in our faith and developing a theology of illness, suffering and death that is in line with Jesus’ life and work and not our earthly fantasy of life and health and wealth as a sign of God’s favor.

Teresa Lindenmeier got the following from a friend in San Diego; a friend of his had found it on a piece of paper stapled to a fence in Newton, Massachusetts.

There is no known author, but it is surely a gift to remind us that in times of difficulty we are called to remember our blessings, hold in our hearts those who are in worse situations than ourselves, and do what we can to make everyone’s lives better in this time of trial:

May we who are merely inconvenienced, remember those whose lives are at stake.

May we who have no risk factors, remember those most vulnerable.

May we who have the luxury of working from home, respect and support those who must choose between preserving their health or making the rent.

May we who have flexibility to care for our own children when their schools close, remember those who have no options.

May we who have to cancel our trips, remember those who have no safe place to go.

May we who are losing on our investments, remember those who have no money to invest.

May we who settle in for a quarantine at home, remember those who have no home.

During this time, when we cannot physically wrap our arms around one another, let us find ways to be the loving embrace of humanity to our neighbors. As fear grips our country, let us choose to love. Be aware, be accepting, be supportive, be kind.

Melinda +
Caring for Caregivers Webinar Available

On Friday, April 24, 2020, Episcopal Relief & Development presented a webinar that explored the magnitude of grief related to the new coronavirus, with a specific focus on caregivers, including healthcare workers and those caring for children, elders or family members. Episcopal Relief & Development members Lura Steele and Tamara Plummer were joined by the Rev. Dr. Ellen Richardson, author of Holy Dying and the Rev. Deacon Mary Alice Jones from the Episcopal Diocese of Montana. The discussion went beyond normal self-care conversations to explore the theological, spiritual and practical concerns of those who are grieving while caring for others. You can listen to the webinar at https://www.episcopalrelief.org/what-we-do/us-disaster-program/faith-based-response-to-epidemics/on-the-topic-of-epidemics/

Resources
For anyone seeking help, here are some resources available to you:

· Church Pension Group Employee Assistance Program: 1-800-480-9967
· National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-7233
· Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration: 1-800-662-4357
· AA Meeting Locator: 1-844-334-6862
· National Suicide Prevention Hotline: 1-800-273-8255

May Birthdays

Hattie McKay 5/5
Shannon Reach 5/6
Leanne McClain 5/9

Mindy Seehafer 5/10
Julie Belton 5/12
Mariah McKay 5/13
Barb Pape 5/14
Maddox Gehlhausen 5/16

Jill Maier 5/17
Maeve Poulson 5/17

Mary Kay Zakotnik 5/25
Bill Kleven 5/26

Morgan Holz 5/31
Suzanne Walker 5/31
When and How Will We Reopen our Churches?

Governor Mark Gordon has issued a continuation and modification of the order that had been set to expire on April 30, 2020. The order extends the prohibition of gatherings of ten (10) people or more in order to help stop the spread of COVID-19 and protect the health of the public. “Gatherings” are any planned or spontaneous event, public or private, bringing together, or likely bringing together, ten (10) people or more in a single room or a single confined space (whether indoors or outdoors) at the same time. This order extends the gathering restrictions through May 15, 2020.

Looking to the future, Governor Gordon has unveiled a plan to transition Wyoming to a new phase of COVID-19 response. The plan creates a pathway to ease restrictions, recover businesses, and resume some activities and will be driven by health-related data. The Rev. Canon Joel Dingman has been in communication with County Public Health officers who reiterate that counties will follow CDC and Department of Health guidelines in determining when and how reopening occurs.

There will be phased re-openings while carefully monitoring new cases, the downward trend of the curve and other data-driven metrics. Public health officials reiterate that nothing changes in phases I or II of any reopening as it relates to recommendations for vulnerable individuals who should continue to shelter in place.

Vulnerable individuals include:

- Individuals 65 years of age and older
- Individuals with serious underlying health conditions, including high blood pressure, chronic lung disease, diabetes, obesity, asthma, and those whose immune systems are compromised.

The County Health Officer with whom Joel spoke indicated that masks will probably be encouraged for everyone attending a service when we do reopen and that churches should be prepared to provide masks or coverings to those who come in without one. Congregations should be prepared to continue offering online service options for the foreseeable future, even if we are able to gather in limited demographic groups.

Bishop Smylie has released his Phased Plan for Re-gathering. It has been sent out by email to everyone on the eSpirit list. This document answers many of the questions everyone has. Diocesan staff has also prepared an easy-to-understand PowerPoint presentation explaining the steps needed as we move toward regathering. The presentation can be accessed through a recorded Zoom gathering and is also available for congregations to share.

The only certainty we have is that the world in front of us is nothing like the world behind us. Let us move forward with hope, confidence, grace, courage, compassion and most of all, love!

Want to be Kept up to Date?

If you want to know the latest about what’s going on in St. Andrew’s and the Diocese, email standrewspinedale@gmail.com and ask to be added to the All St. Andrew’s list. That way you’ll get the information we have as soon as it’s available. St. Andrew’s will be offering the PowerPoint presentation explaining the regathering process during the last 15 minutes of each Coffee Hour during May. Hard copies of the handouts will be available at the church in the narthex following May 6th Coffee Hour.

Sunday Services on YouTube

The Diocesan staff prepares virtual service offerings for those who wish to take advantage of these videos. All are pre-recorded so folks can watch at their leisure. Bulletins are attached to the email announcing the service, and YouTube Video Links for services will be provided via the eSpirit daily email 24 hours before the day of the planned service. They are also available on Facebook.
A Letter from our Senior Warden

Our world has changed. For many, it is a time of great fear. This heartless virus knows no pity, and all wish to avoid it.

I think that the uncertainty we all find ourselves in right now can be almost paralyzing. What will happen in our world? What will happen in our household? For some of us, it is an opportunity to be still and listen for the inner voice, for God to be speaking to us all, most likely in a whisper. For others, our need to be in control and KNOW what will happen may cause chaos in our inner - and outer- beings.

One thing we can be in control of, is our reaction to it. If we have a gift, it is time to share it, whether it is to thread your sewing machine and make masks, or to call friends and family on the phone (I know! the lowly phone!) to let them hear a voice of calm and caring thought. We as a church community can share monetary gifts as well, adding to the humbling outpouring of generosity to those who have lost their jobs, who are ill, or who have no one to care for them, even to go buy groceries.

The Diocesan Foundation gave each church in Wyoming $10,000 as a start to help people finding themselves suddenly on the edge of losing a place to live, lack of food, fuel or utility money. St. Andrew’s has distributed a large portion of the funds to people in our community. People are also giving to the COVID-19 relief fund through the diocesan website.

Let Melinda know if you, or someone you know, could use some financial help. And, let her know if the strain of uncertainty and fear places you or someone in danger of emotional illness. There is help to be had!

Our isolated rural county is a very caring one - young people have volunteered to shop on behalf of elders, older people are sewing, animals continue to be cared for, banks are processing loans for small businesses - it shows that human beings have the capacity for deep love. Indeed, let us continue on the path of the Golden Rule. Simply treat others as you would wish to be treated.

Thanks to every one of you who have responded to need in our community in so many ways. Your un-sung works make a big difference in sending the Light into the world!

We will have a lot to celebrate when we can safely get back together in church.

Joni Mack

Dear Episcopalian Church Women,

I’ve wanted to send out a letter to all of you for quite sometime now, but since were living in “uncharted waters”, at present, I wasn’t sure of a timeline for this project.

When we were last together at the beeswax cover craft in the undercroft at St. John’s, we had discussed the idea of putting on another fundraiser for the ECU to add to their savings. I was hoping the frozen casserole dinners would be a spring project; meeting a couple Saturday mornings in the undercroft to stage an assemble line type production, to make the casseroles. We will do this, at some point, maybe even this summer.

The ECW have accomplished great notoriety as good cooks, through their pie making and sales at Rendezvous over the years. (Thank you, ladies!) Piggy backing on these talents, we can easily add frozen casserole dinners that will be enjoyed by working Moms, Dads, and families who would just would like a night when “dinner is served”!

Mary Thompson put out the two recipes we will use in a previous newsletter. These two recipes are copied, and are available in the narthex to pick up. At least for now we can try them out. My family loved both the lasagna, and the chicken pot pie. (still need to experiment with the biscuits on top, freeze on casserole, or separate.) See how much each dish costs, and please email back with any input.

Missing everyone,
See you soon!
juliawarnercook@gmail.com
699-2845

John 12:3
Low at thy feet, Lord Jesus,
This is the place for me.
There I have learned deep lessons,
Truths that have set me free.
I was inspired by this poem, after reading about Mary and Martha and their preparations for dinner with Jesus.
What is a Fresh Expression?

A Fresh Expression is a faith gathering established primarily to benefit people who are not members of any church. Fresh Expressions are Jesus-centered faith communities.

Fresh Expressions in the Episcopal Diocese of Wyoming (EDOW) are sent from an Episcopal Church congregation or from an ecumenical project that includes an Episcopal partner. This allows the Bishop to welcome them as part of the diocesan family and make certain that support from the diocese is available at all times.

Pioneer leadership in a fresh expression of church can be lay or ordained, staff or volunteer. Training and licensing criteria similar to licensed worship leaders and preachers encourage consistent training and support for all pioneers.

A Fresh Expression is:

- Missional – Fresh Expressions are about bringing NEW people to God’s kingdom, those not already attending church (the “nones” and the “dones”).
- Contextual – it seeks to fit the environment or setting in which it exists such as a community with similar interest, need, or hobby outside the walls of established churches.
- Ecclesial - It has an identity, interacting with local Christians, God, the wider church and the world. It intends to become a faith community.
- Formational - It aims to form disciples by helping people find a deeper and more meaningful relationship with Jesus.

It is a new Christian-based group, rather than an existing group modified, adapted or changed, which is engaging, or trying to engage, with the non-churched or formerly-churched. It is not an outreach project from an existing church. The aim is to work within the context and culture of the community, not to make it change and adapt to fit into an existing church context.

The group meets, or seeks to meet, regularly (at least once a month) to develop a sense of community.

It has, or it is seeking, a name that helps give it an identity.

There is an intention to be a faith gathering. This could be an intention from the start, or through a discovery on the way. The key is that it is not seen as a bridge back to “real church” or as a social group with no faith element.

While Fresh Expressions exist across denominations in the United States, our initial effort is for the Fresh Expression to be an ecumenical project which includes an Episcopal partner. Fresh Expressions are not ways to circumvent theological or liturgical rubrics and start a church outside of the diocesan umbrella.

There is some form of leadership recognized by those within the community and by those outside of it.

There are aspirations for the four creedal “marks” of church, or ecclesial relationships – “in, up, of and out.”

In/one - Inward commitment to discipleship and fellowship
Up/holy - an upward reach to God
Of/catholic - part of the universal church and part of a deep, historic stream
Out/apostolic - Outward reach to people beyond our circle

Remember, this is not intended to be a replacement for St. Andrews in the Pines. But, also remember - We Are All The Church. If you are interested in starting or have a idea of a Fresh Expression that would be beneficial to our community, contact me on my cell phone #307-231-1450 or via email rbelton57@gmail.com.

Prayers and Blessings,
Rev. Randy Belton
COVID-19 NEWS

Update on the Foundation COVID-19 Grant
St. Andrew’s has so far given out $5,053.22 of their $10,000 COVID-19 Foundation grant. That includes a $1000 grant to the Food Basket, three grants for rent assistance, and three grants for utility bill assistance. If you would like to add to that grant, please either mail a check with COVID-19 in the memo line to St. Andrew’s, or donate to our Outreach/COVID-19 fund through the online giving button on St. Andrew’s website. If you would like to support the Foundation’s work diocese-wide, you can also use our online giving button and choose the “Foundation” option. If you know of people who need help, please have them call St. Andrew’s at 307-749-3265 or email standrewspinedale@gmail.com to request an application.

Respite from the Virus
As we tire of reruns on television or the endless news briefs around COVID-19 and we’ve finished the various projects we’ve started, you might be finding yourself at loose ends, or feeling a little disjointed in these days of quarantine and isolation. Maybe doing a bit of “living in the Word” might alleviate some of our unrest.

The Diocese has a variety of top-notch, easy to do, easy to access programs available to us through the Iona Collaborative that are videos with handouts on various topics such as Biblical Studies, Church Leadership, Spirituality, The Abundant Life Series, Anglicanism, and Prayer. Access for use of these videos is funded by the Diocese. To use in your congregation or individually, please contact the Very Rev. Lori Modesitt at lori@wyomingdiocese.org or 307-322-6064.

Giving Options during COVID-19 and Beyond
As you are well aware, no longer having church services means that our most common means of financially supporting St. Andrew’s—passing the plate on Sundays—is no longer available. Please remember that most of our operational expenses continue even though we are not gathering. So we are offering two other options for making donations. Mailing a check to St. Andrew’s has always been an option, and those envelopes go directly to the treasurer. The newest option is online giving through our website. If you click on the “Online Giving” link on the menu at the top of the page, you’ll go to our Tithe.ly page. There you can make a secure donation that will be deposited into our bank account. There are four options for designating your gift: pledge, if you are fulfilling your pledge; general, if you do not currently pledge to St. Andrew’s; Outreach/COVID-19, if you wish to add to the $10,000 given by the Foundation; and, Foundation, if you would like to support the work of the Foundation for the Episcopal Diocese of Wyoming.

Online giving will continue to be offered even after the crisis is over. Through Tithe.ly you can set up your gift to be sent automatically, and we will also continue to add categories for giving as they become needed. We hope that this will make everyone’s lives easier, not only in the immediate future, but for years to come.
Whisper in a Cave by Jocelyn Moore

My elementary school teacher drilled a safety lesson into her pupils: stop, look and listen.

Five decades later, that advice is still salient. For the past few months, we’ve been in stop mode. Like Elijah hiding in a cave from Queen Jezebel, we have felt under attack, concerned about a hostile enemy capable of great harm. But Elijah’s self-imposed isolation, his “social distancing” as it were, had a great benefit. He was able to hear the “gentle whisper” of the Lord. This whisper wasn’t heard in the windstorm, earthquake and hurricane that ripped past the front of Elijah’s grotto. (1 Kings 19:11)

It’s not heard in our usual busy lives either, where we are distracted by noise and constant activity. God speaks to us as he did to Elijah, when we are quiet and focused on him. When we stop, look and listen. What did God save to Elijah and speaks to us today? To get going, to interact with the world and continue in God’s work. As we emerge from our bunkers, with a fresh comprehension of our interconnected world, the value of community, more respect for those who sacrifice for us, and an anticipation of what needs to be done, we are transformed. We have an opportunity to truly be the hands and feet of God. Called by His soft and loving voice, we reach out to others, responding with empathy and kindness. Stop, look and listen.

IN THE (ZOOM) ZONE by Jocelyn Moore

Zoom is the “in” activity for 2020. We “zoom” church, telehealth conferences, family get-togethers and business meetings. It’s ubiquitous, and astoundingly, other folks expect we know this new software app. Yikes! So, let’s take a few minutes and review some of the basics.

Let’s start at the top. At the Zoom screen top right, you can select whether you see everyone (gallery view) or just the person currently speaking (speaker view).

Next, move your cursor to the bottom and watch the buttons pop up. Here’s what they do, L-R:

Microphone/Mute: Click on the mic to mute or unmute. You can talk to other participants or not.

Camera/Video: Allow others to see you or not. Click on the symbol to activate the camera.

Invite: If you are the host, or allowed by the meeting host, invite others to participate.

Participants: Click to see screen names of who is attending.

Share Screen: Clicking the green colored icon lets other people see your computer screen and ANY open files. Be careful with this one! Close files you don’t want to share with other participants. You must have the host’s permission.

Chat: click on the balloon to see participants and send a message to all or a specific person.

Record: as meeting host or if host gives permission, record the session for later review/share.

IMPORTANT: If your microphone is on, (i.e. there’s no red slash through the mic icon), what you say can be heard by ALL participants. Your voice and background noise activates your camera, and if your camera is on, everyone sees you while you’re talking. So, please, during the sermon, mute your microphone. If you have to leave or move around, turn the Video off momentarily so your movements don’t distract other participants.

Yep, it’s new but we’re all learning together and we’ll be experts soon! Let’s keep zooming in on Sundays and Coffee Hours and maintain our connections as a church and community!

Special nod to the University of San Diego, CA for the screen image. Check out this link for their Zoom tutorial and more info. https://blink.ucsd.edu/technology/file-sharing/zoom/guide/navigation.html
St, Andrew’s in the Pines in May

May 2, 9, 16, 23, 30: Caregivers Support Group by Zoom at 4 pm.
May 3, 10, 17, 24, 31: Sunday services by Zoom at 9 am.
May 4, 11, 18, 25: Monday Coffee Hour by Zoom at noon.
May 6, 13, 20, 27: Wednesday Coffee Hour by Zoom at 9 am.
May 11: Vestry meeting by Zoom at 5:15 pm.

St. Andrew’s in the Pines Episcopal Church
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