

An icon depicting the Resurrection. An angel in a blue and red robe with large brown wings is shown in flight on the left, holding a green wreath. On the right, Jesus, with a beard and wearing a green robe over a red one, is seated on a blue ladder. He is holding a red, striped egg. The background is a deep blue sky with white stars. The entire scene is set against a light tan background.

The Diocese of Springfield

E-NEWSLETTER

March 2024 - The Third Week in Lent

House of Bishop's Gathering

From February 28th through March 4th, Bishop Burgess attended the 2024 Spring House of Bishops Meeting at Camp Allen in Navasota, Texas. A series of meetings, services of common prayer, intentional fellowship, breakout sessions, continuing education, and in-depth Bible study were engaged ahead of the April 24th Day of Discernment with the nominees for Presiding Bishop and General Convention scheduled for June of this year.



UPCOMING:

- 03/07 - The Feast of Saints Perpetua & Felicity
- 03/09 - The Feast of Saint Gregory of Nyssa
- 03/12 - The Feast of Saint Gregory the Great
- 03/18 - The Feast of Saint Cyril of Jerusalem
- 03/19 - The Feast of Saint Joseph
- 03/24 - Palm Sunday
- 03/25-30 - Holy Week
- 03/31 - Resurrection Sunday

Each bishop within the House is assigned to a class based on the year of their election by their respective diocese. Pictured is Bishop Burgess' College for Bishops Class of 2021 (L to R): South Carolina, Chicago, Nevada, Springfield, Upper South Carolina, Pittsburg, Iowa, and West Virginia. Missing from the photo is Central Ecuador (Iglesia Episcopal del Ecuador - Diócesis Central). Chaired by members of the planning committee due to the post surgery recovery priorities of Presiding Bishop Michael Curry, the theme of this year's meeting was, Grounded in Worship and Work.

"Give grace, O heavenly Father, to all bishops and other ministers, that they may, both by their life and doctrine, set forth thy true and lively Word, and rightly and duly administer thy holy Sacraments (The Book of Common Prayer, pg. 329)."



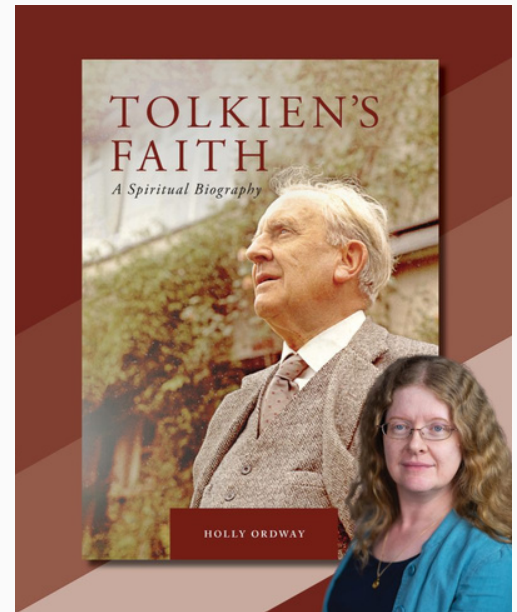
Annual Mass of Chrism

On Tuesday, March 26, Tuesday of Holy Week at 11:00 AM the Cathedral Church of St. Paul in Springfield will host the Annual Mass of Chrism. During this mass clergy renew their ordination vows and holy oil will be blessed. This oil is used throughout the year by our clergy to bless the sick and the dying. The faithful of the Diocese are welcome to join the clergy at the Cathedral for this celebration and mark of God's faithfulness to His Church in central and southern Illinois.



From Nashotah House

On March 12, 2024 at 7:00 PM Nashotah House will host a lecture by Dr. Holly Ordway. From Nashotah House: Many people know J. R. R. Tolkien as the author of *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. Some know that he was a Christian. But few are familiar with the specifics of Tolkien's faith—baptized as an Anglican in South Africa and raised as a Catholic in England. Fewer still understand his struggle to live out his faith through great personal loss and the tumultuous events of two world wars.



Scholar Holly Ordway, PhD, recently published the definitive work on these subjects, *Tolkien's Faith: A Spiritual Biography*. In this talk, she will explore Tolkien's religious belief and practice against the historical backdrop of his life in twentieth century England. This talk is for all who love the stories of *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*, who are curious about the man behind these great works of fantasy, who are interested in the relationship of Anglicanism and Roman Catholicism, or who wish to explore the role of the Christian faith in imagination and artistic creation. Copies of *Tolkien's Faith* will be available for purchase and signing. For more information and tickets to this events [please click here](#).

Coming April 27, 2024: Preaching with Children. This one-day workshop is designed to equip you to explore the Word of God with the Church's youngest members. Make plans to join us! Whether you are a priest, teacher, chaplain, or Sunday School leader, this workshop will offer practical help in crafting homilies specifically for children. Drawing on insights gleaned over the past 70 years within the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd movement, Dr. Ann Garrido will introduce key characteristics of childhood and children's spirituality and present ways to reflect on Scripture through the lens of the young child. This event is being made possible through the generous funding of the Lilly Endowment's Christian Parenting and Caregiving Initiative. [Click here to learn more and register today](#).

From The Episcopal Church

Online registration is open for visitors to the 81st General Convention of The Episcopal Church, scheduled for June 23-28 in Louisville, Kentucky. An onsite registration area will also open June 21.

Visitor registration fees for the entire convention are \$150 in advance, or \$180 at the site. The cost for day visitors is \$50 per day. Youth ages 12 to 18 will pay \$50 for the whole convention. Access to the exhibit area only is \$20 per day.

Visitor registration fees allow access to all areas of General Convention, including visitor galleries in the House of Bishops and House of Deputies, legislative committee rooms and hearings, the exhibit area, and worship services.

All registrants will be required to show a photo ID and sign a liability waiver and photo release agreement when they pick up their badge at the registration area. [Please click here for more information.](#)

United Thank Offering Spring Ingathering

All UTO Coordinators, churches and parishes will receive information the week after Easter for the upcoming 2024 Spring Ingathering. Happy Spring and Easter to all! Many thanks for your support to UTO Ministry.

Blessings,
Joyce C. Wright
UTO Coordinator





Icon of Extreme Humility from Uncut Mountain

Province V Information

The Big Provincial Gathering (BPG) is an opportunity to meet new people and connect with others who share your ministry passions. It is structured like a "ministry fair" so that people may host workshops and conversations to share program and resource ideas with others. Pre-event trainings will run from Thursday afternoon (April 25th) through Friday morning (April 26th), the Synod meets on Friday afternoon (26th), we celebrate a community Eucharist Friday night, and workshops run on Saturday (27th). Everyone is invited to this event! Mark your calendar now and revisit this page to follow the newest information. [Please click here for more information and registration.](#)

"The Fog of Lent"

from St. George's (Belleville) Newsletter by The Rev. Mark Ohlemeier

During my three years of seminary in Sewanee, Tennessee, I was able to take in much of the beauty of that place on the edge of the Cumberland Plateau. I loved walking or riding my bicycle across campus on my way to class, gazing in wonderment at the majestic trees and colorful flowers, listening to the birds sing and other animals scurry through the brush. It gave me time to reflect on the wonders of nature and to appreciate the beauty of creation.

One thing I never got used to, however, was the thick fog that occasionally developed over the area from late fall to early spring. It was a cloud that descended upon the whole mountain, sometimes lasting for days at a time and reducing visibility to only a few feet. Driving was a challenge because the road and the curbs (not to mention pedestrians and other traffic) were virtually invisible in the thick soup. My walks on these foggy days were eerie experiences: I could not see the trees or the flowers, and I could not hear the birds or other animals. It was a feeling of isolation, of being cut off from the world and not knowing what was ahead of me.

“The Fog of Lent” continued

The season of Lent can sometimes create this same type of fog within my soul, as I am reminded of my own blindness and shortcomings in my service to the Lord. In my self-examination, I am sometimes left feeling isolated, shamed by those sins that seem to have enveloped my whole being, and I am afraid of where the path might take me. But even in the midst of this haze I will catch a glimpse of some relief, like the headlights of a passing car piercing through the fog, and I realize that even in my isolation I am never truly alone. God is with me along this journey, guiding me through the fog of my sin so that in the end I may see the splendor and beauty promised by the resurrection.



Fog at Sewanee from University of the South's Facebook

As we all walk through the fog of another Lenten journey, let us always be mindful of the fact that the Lord is with us every step of the way. Let's not be afraid to walk into the cloud, to confront our own blindness and shortcomings. For that is the only way to true repentance, to lift the fog, and to witness the bright day that lies ahead.

An Image for Lent

This 12th-century icon is from the monastery on Mount Sinai. It's a reflection on the work of one of their abbots, John Climacus or St. John of the Ladder. This icon was made to reflect one of the greatest monastic works of the 6th-7th centuries where Climacus describes our journey to God as a ladder by which we climb closer to His divine presence. Sometimes the ladder has 30 rungs for the chapters in Climacus' book, the Ladder of Divine Ascent, and sometimes it has 33 rungs for the years of Christ's life.



An Image for Lent continued

The ladder cutting across the icon draws our attention to monks and a bishop making their way to Christ up the ladder. Along the way, some monks are falling off or being pulled off by the small demons on the right side of the ladder. We see the monks falling off at any point on the ladder, exemplifying that everyone on the ladder, even the closest to God, can fall. Some monks find themselves headed for the devouring mouth at the bottom center of the icon.

The greater part of the icon is Christ in the top right-hand corner beckoning His faithful saints to him, waiting on the other side to grab their hand and pull them from the ladder. There's a group of angels in the top left corner interceding for the monks. At the bottom, we see a group of monks who are not quite to this divine ascent yet but encouraging and interceding for the monks on the ladder.

The ladder in this icon divides heaven and earth and connecting these two places is Christ. Christ is ultimately the one who beckons us to a holy life, to make the divine ascent. We see that both heaven and earth are participating in the grand narrative through the angels and men interceding for the climbing monks. In a way, it is an icon of how we are all participating in the divine life on various levels. It is an image of the church as militant, expectant, and triumphant.

The icon is traditionally looked at as an image of our ascetic (disciplines of self-denial) life which is appropriate for the Lenten season. It's an image to look to when we don't want to fast or feel like we're about to fall into temptation. It is both an encouragement and a serious warning. Christ is beckoning us to holiness and we are encouraged to this divine life by the angels, by the saints, and by each other. The devils and temptations lurk around us who are on this journey and if we're not careful we'll allow their push to send us flying to the abyss.

“Do not be surprised that you fall every day; do not give up, but stand your ground courageously. And assuredly the angel who guards you will honour your patience. While a wound is still fresh and warm it is easy to heal, but old, neglected, and festering ones are hard to cure and require for their care much treatment, cutting, plastering, and cauterization. Many from long neglect become incurable. But with God, all things are possible (Matthew 19:26).”

St. John Climacus, Step 5.30, Ladder of Divine Ascent

Please include those in our Diocese who are pursuing Holy Orders in your prayers:
Danny Shuler, Postulant, St. Thomas, Salem

You can visit our website to check out the most up-to-date prayer calendar ([click here](#)) or our diocesan calendar ([click here](#)) with feasts and other events listed for around the Diocese.

The Epiphanytide 2024 issue of the Springfield Current is out now! You can access the Springfield Current through our website at episcopalspringfield.org/news/springfield-current. You can also sign up to receive a hard copy of the Current to your doorstep free of charge on that same webpage. If you would like to change or update your subscription for the Springfield Current or our monthly e-news please visit episcopalspringfield.org/subscribe



The Episcopal Church in Central and Southern Illinois

