



The Diocese of Springfield

E-NEWSLETTER

March 2026 - The Week of II Lent

Annunciation, Leonardo c. 1472-1476

2026 Pre-Lenten Clergy Retreat

Over forty priests and deacons of our Diocese spent Wednesday afternoon, February 11th through Friday lunch, February 13th together on retreat at King's House Retreat and Conference Center on the campus of the National Shrine of Our Lady of Snows in Belleville. The Pre-Lenten Clergy Retreat is offered as an intentional time for prayer, worship, discovery, collegial fellowship and the quiet refreshing of the soul.

Father John Ander Runkle, Registered Architect, offered three reflections on the topic of sacred space and the responsibility clergy has to continually cultivate a sense of holiness for those searching for it. Fr. Runkle invited good discussions during his three addresses by posing



UPCOMING:

- 3/03 - John and Charles Wesley
- 3/07 - Perpetua and Felicity
- 3/09 - Gregory of Nyssa
- 3/12 - Gregory the Great
- 3/17 - Patrick of Ireland
- 3/18 - Cyril of Jerusalem
- 3/19 - Saint Joseph
- 3/20 - Cuthbert
- 3/22 - Gregory the Illuminator
- 3/25 - The Annunciation of Our Lord
- 3/30 - Mary of Egypt



probing questions on the meaning, history, relevance and necessity of sacred space in the world today.

Honorable mention is in order for the congregations who supported their clergy in this intentional time away on retreat and on behalf of the retired clergy who led by example with their participation, either residentially or as a commuter. It was wonderful being together, having the opportunity for Holy Eucharist before the altar of the National Shrine Chapel and praying the Daily Offices together in the conference center Chapel.

Thank you to Henry Evans of St. Andrew's in Edwardsville who served as Eucharistic organist, to Dean Mark Ohlemeier who ensured that all necessary arrangements for the opening Eucharist were made, to Fr. Garron Daniels for having everything in place for our observance of the Daily Offices, to Fr. Johnathan Butcher who accompanied the services in the Conference Center Chapel on the piano, to Fr. Peter Speropulos of the Diocese of Missouri who joined us as retreat Confessor, and to Fr. Asplin who accepted the invitation to be the retreat photographer.

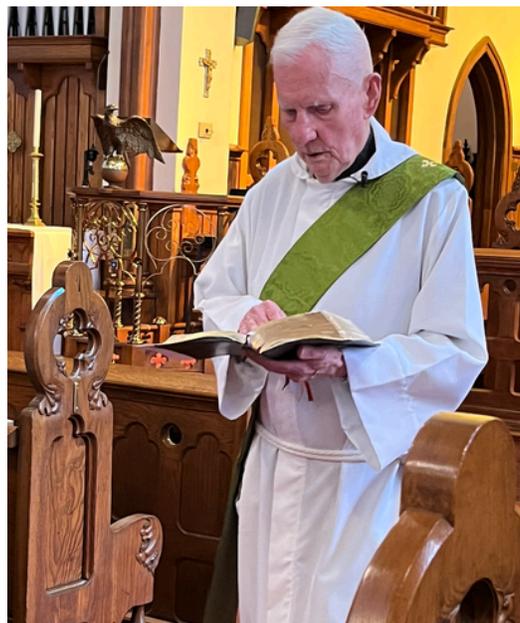
Experiencing the collegiality and reverence for sacred time and sacred space that our Diocesan clergy exhibit is another reason among many why the Diocese of Springfield is such a special place.



Reception for Deacon Don Coventry

By Mary Ellen Wells

St. John's Church in Decatur bade a bittersweet farewell to Deacon Don Coventry on Sunday, February 15th. Deacon Coventry has faithfully served the parish for over twenty years, visiting hospitals and ministering to the sick, the elderly and the dying. He took the Holy Eucharist to the homebound, helping those needing a hand or a listening ear or even a good story or two. Deacon Coventry said his farewell from the pulpit at the Mass and then was feted at a tasty buffet lunch receiving generous gifts from the parishioners. Deacon Don is retiring and moving to Georgia to be near family. He will be sorely missed!



Chrism Mass and Luncheon

All are invited to join with our Diocesan clergy in celebrating the Mass of Chrism at the Cathedral Church of St. Paul the Apostle at 11:00 A.M. on Tuesday, March 31st. This service will include the renewal of ordination vows and the blessing of holy oils. Following the service, a luncheon will be offered for clergy members and their spouses ([register here by March 19th](#)).





Stabat Mater Concert

The Episcopal Parish of Alton would like to invite the Diocese to join them on Saturday, March 14th at 3:00 P.M. to experience Pergolesi's hauntingly beautiful Stabat Mater, a masterwork of sorrow that captures the Virgin Mary's grief at the cross through sublime duets and powerful harmonies, perfect for contemplative reflection during the Lenten season. Keith Wehmeier, countertenor and Ashley Fabian, soprano with baroque orchestra from Early Music Missouri. The concert will be held at St. Paul's Episcopal Church (10 East Third Street) and is free to the public with a free will offering will be taken up to support the musicians.

Music for the Passion

The choirs of Emmanuel Memorial Episcopal Church and Grace Lutheran Church will present "Music for the Passion" on Palm Sunday, March 29, at 3 p.m. at Emmanuel Memorial in Champaign. The program includes Giovanni Pergolesi's Stabat Mater and Margaret Bonds' Simon Bore the Cross. Pergolesi's Stabat Mater is a well-known rendition of the hymn to the Virgin Mary as she mourns the crucifixion of Christ. Simon Bore the Cross, which uses text by Langston Hughes, is a cantata inspired by Simon of Cyrene, who

helped Jesus carry his cross.

Joining the choirs are soloists Dr. Ollie Watts Davis, soprano and professor at the University of Illinois School of Music; Dr. Scott MacLeod, baritone and associate professor of voice at the U of I School of Music; Erica Ancell, soprano and recent vocal performance graduate of the U of I; and Thereza Lituma, alto and director of admissions at the U of I School of Music. Nick Pierle, choir director of Grace Lutheran, will conduct, and William A. Murphy, choirmaster at Emmanuel, will accompany the choir and a

tring quartet on the organ.

This concert is funded by the Melissa M. Noel Concert Series at Emmanuel Memorial.

The church is located at 102 N. State St. in Champaign. Parking is available in our lot off of Park Street and on surrounding streets.



Nashotah House Arts Retreat

Artists and art-lovers alike are invited to The Tree of Life, an arts retreat hosted at Nashotah House from June 15-19, 2026. Over the course of the week, we will gather in prayer, shared meals, and the joy of artistic collaboration as we participate in discussion groups, studio demonstrations and instruction, and, most significantly, make art together. Drawing on philosopher Hans Georg Gadamer’s inspirational essay “The Relevance of the Beautiful” on the tripartite nature of Beauty — play, symbol, and festival — retreat participants and instructors will collaborate in serious play to produce meaningful and beautiful symbols, designs, objects, and images, culminating in a festive final group installation piece. Registration is due by May 15th. For more information or to register, [click here](#).

Sewanee Liturgical Arts Conference 2026

St. Augustine’s Altar Guild of All Saints’ Chapel in Sewanee, Tennessee will host a liturgical arts conference featuring Marianna Garthwaite Klaiman, an expert in the field of church textiles. Marianna will offer a presentation in the morning covering many aspects of our church vestments, including their history and specific information about care and restoration. The afternoon will be devoted to a hands-on workshop where participants will make a padded hanger suitable for use with heavy vestments. The fee for the conference is \$50.00 per person and includes lunch and all materials for the workshop. Space is limited to 100 participants, so register early! For more details and registration information, email staugustinesguild@gmail.com.

UTO Spring Ingathering

Spring Ingathering Letters will be mailed out the week of March 16th. United Thank Offering Coordinators can decide on a date for their respective parish or church ingatherings. Blessings to all during the Lenten season. With gratitude, Joyce C. Wright



Please include those in our Diocese who are pursuing Holy Orders in your prayers:

Danny Shuler, Postulant, St. Thomas, Salem
Andrew Mead, Postulant, Trinity, Lincoln
Zach Buscher, Postulant, Trinity, Lincoln
Jeff Wenzel, Postulant, The Cathedral Church of St. Paul the Apostle, Springfield
Len Harris, Postulant, Church of the Redeemer, Cairo

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.



Saint Joseph and the Christ Child. Wikimedia Commons



DIOCESE OF SPRINGFIELD

The Episcopal Church in Central and Southern Illinois

