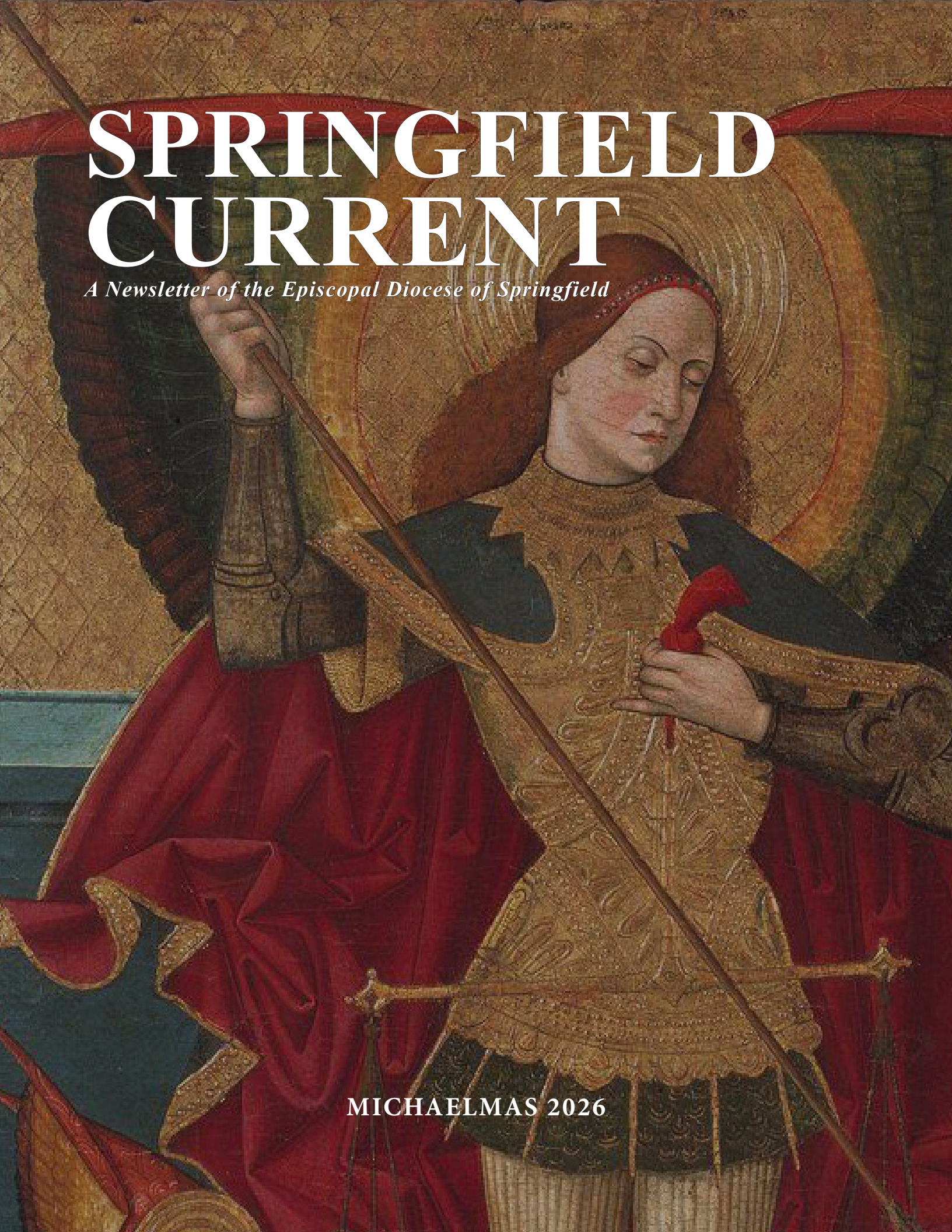


SPRINGFIELD CURRENT

A Newsletter of the Episcopal Diocese of Springfield

MICHAELMAS 2026



*f*rom the Bishop

Dear People of God;

As I write this article, we are four weeks away from our 149th Annual Synod as the Episcopal Diocese of Springfield. Our gathering is an expression of evangelism all unto itself. Regardless of the legislative priorities, we will continue on exodus together, day-by-day and week-by-week, often slowing the pace to allow those who have wandered off to remain with us.

There is a tremendous amount of healthy Church going on right here in central and southern Illinois. Let that be our primary focus during this 149th Annual Synod. My definition of "healthy Church" is this: we allow the rigor of our daily lives and ministries to make us spiritually fit for our entering regularly into Holy Mystery. The culture expects that we remove ourselves or at least insure ourselves against hardship, disadvantage, disappointment, loss and challenges: all scriptural expectations placed upon the people of God who walk as yet by faith. I believe part of our call is to develop the capacity now for what our inheritance is promised to be. We follow a God who calls us each by name (Isaiah 43:1 and John 10:3) and expects that we follow without any indication of where we will go or where He has need of us being.

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SPRINGFIELD CURRENT

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF SPRINGFIELD

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We accept submissions for *The Current* **on the 15th of the months of December, March, June, and September.** Articles, photos, and news can be submitted to *communicator@episcopalspringfield.org*. Contributions to the monthly e-newsletter may be also be sent to that email and are accepted on an ongoing basis.

Cover art: Saint Michael and the Dragon, Spanish Painter, ca. 1405, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, public domain.

Background image: Zach Buscher, October 2022

CONTRIBUTING

Communication serves a crucial function in every ministry. Sharing information among congregations, committees, and individual members is no small task. Welcoming new members to our diocesan family also requires unique communication efforts at all levels.

Your contribution to this ministry of communication helps spread the word about what God is doing in our lives, in our congregations, in our diocese, and in the Episcopal Church at large. Please consider making a gift today.

We are committed to sending our diocesan publication to all members and friends of the Episcopal Diocese of Springfield. It is not necessary to contribute in order to receive *The Springfield Current*. Nevertheless, if you choose to support The Springfield Current, your contribution will be of great assistance in this ministry and is tax deductible. Thank you for your support!

DIOCESE OF SPRINGFIELD



Fr. Parker Asplin, Episcopal Church Camp of IL, 2026

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FROM THE BISHOP

Continued

This is why it is so important for our children and grandchildren to enter into sacred liturgy where our prayer book tradition is forming theological minds and wills within an incarnate relationship with God. It is not enough for them to grow up to be nice and caring. We want them to know who their Father is. If we can give them that experience as a direct sacramental encounter, their actions will align with that relationship. We have every right and responsibility to expect that our children live as it is they pray. It is by no accident that many high schools recognize as their valedictorian, salutatorian and honor students those who have been formed spiritually within our prayer book and Hymnal tradition. Those sources are more than a way to get through liturgical worship; it is how the Church, through the ages, confronted the will of almighty God while entering the unknown with only their faith as their guide.

> ***Our prayer book... is how the Church, through the ages, confronted the will of almighty God while entering the unknown with only their faith as their guide.***

Yes, we confront many great challenges today; as did our ancestors. It remains within some of our memories and those of our parents or grandparents, how we confronted world war, the threat of a polio epidemic, a technology shift that allowed us to communicate across continents for the first time, and an economic depression that required much more of the Church because there was little to no social safety net. I grew up during a time when duck and cover exercises were largely obsolete but there were Civil Defense dosimeters in every public school. We, too, were at the brink of political, social or economic collapse. And yet, absent from our homes, schools or churches was an anxiousness that exists today. We may not know what the demands will be upon us in ten years, but we may be assured that the Church's mission will remain the same. Our technology, which does not recognize sin as it does not possess moral agency, will not save us. Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ has, is now, and will save us, through His Church.

Continuing on the point of good church, let me bring us up to date on the Diocesan Capital Improvement Appeal that was launched during our 148th Annual Synod, which was, at the time, thought to be a lofty goal. Professional fundraisers whom I consulted cautioned us not to be too



Fr. Parker Asplin, St. James Chapel in Marion

aggressive in our reach. Their concern was that we did not possess a comprehensive enough diocesan mailing/contact list, risking the disappointment of missing our goal. Yes, we are 33 altars with thousands of communicants. However, the contact list that the diocese possesses is that of clergy and diocesan leaders, not a comprehensive listing of parishioners or communicants. As a diocese, we took a huge risk when it came to requesting gifts to the Appeal in the total amount of $250,000.

In addition, the Appeal campaign was accomplished "in house" with the already fully-extended professional staff. The creativity, the timing and the professional attitude toward inviting our very best gifts were not only their doing. These were a reflection of their dedication to this diocese. That is why I am so proud of the Diocese of Springfield for responding to our Appeal within an attitude of tremendous abundance. At the time of this writing, we are at 102% of our goal with five weeks left to the campaign (ending All Saints' Sunday). In addition, the City of Marion has awarded our diocese a $5,032 Tax Increment Financing (TIF) grant for work that we have already accomplished under Phase I on the campus of St. James' Chapel in Marion. Gifts are still being received while promised capital improvement grants are being awarded to parishes and missions who have communicated immediate need. We are reminded to expect only the best from the faithful when it comes to advancing the priorities of the kingdom of God. Professional fundraisers are good at matching passion with a cause. However, they have yet to measure the conviction of the Church.

Giving is personal and it is intended to bring glory to God. In considering the donors, many names represent those from throughout our diocese and far beyond. Cardinal parishes have taken draws from their endowments while Episcopal Church bishops, both active and retired, gave generously, which communicates an appreciation for our work here that surpasses the expected collegiality. Diocese from across the Episcopal Church gave generously, often with notes of encouragement included. Family members, friends and work associates also contributed mightily because they have a deep-seated appreciation for us and the manner in which we go about our mission and ministry here in central and southern Illinois. Please take a moment to review the donors list while offering a prayer of thanksgiving for their attitude of holy charity. Specifically, that as the Church, we may never be destitute of such gifts.

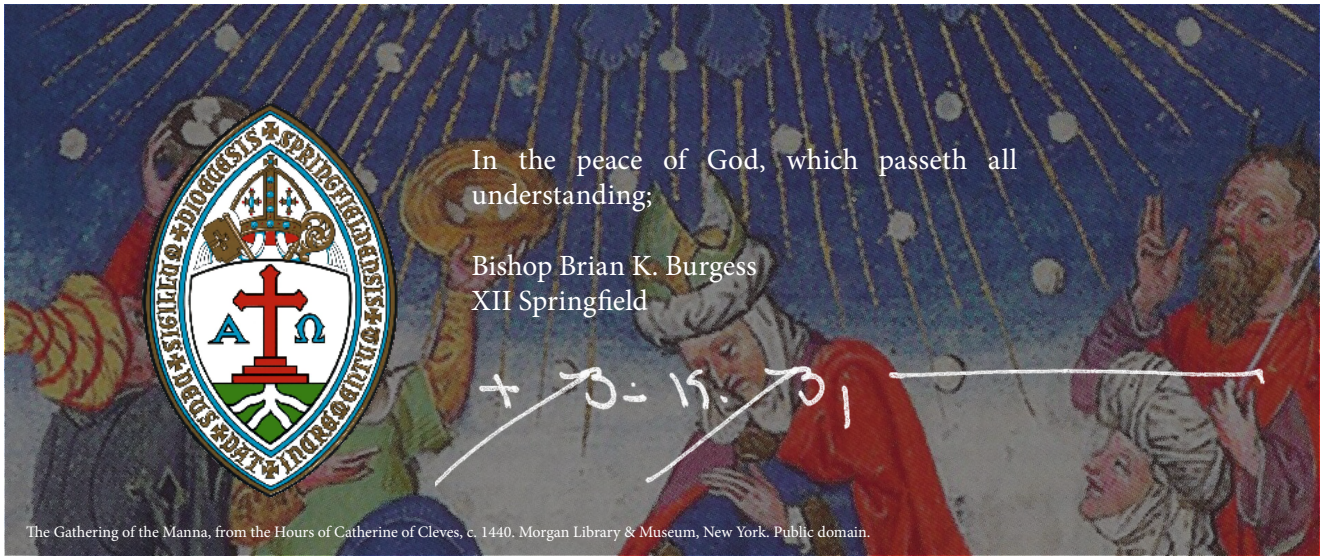
Weather permitting, as we approach the end of the year we will enter Phase II of our work at the Chapel of St. James' in Marion. Shortly after the adjournment of our 149th Annual Synod, you may expect the invitation from my office for the second wave of capital improvement grant applications to be submitted. We are reconstituting the Temple wall in Jerusalem to the glory of God (Nehemiah 1:1-7:73) not building the tower of Babel (Genesis 11:1-9) in order to make a name for ourselves among those who do not keep holy day. Thank you for living as it is you pray.

The Church has spent the last 50 years or so conducting the ministry of our risen and ascended Lord under conditions of perceived scarcity. I believe that perception is largely manipulated to get us to rely on our own might rather than the might, majesty and dominion of God. Attention vestries, commissions on ministry and seminaries: it is now time to raise up the next generation of Church leaders who can proclaim the Holy Gospel with an attitude of abundance. And although we go out each morning gathering just enough for today (Exodus 16:19-20), it is most certainly an abundance that we possess right here in the Diocese of Springfield.



William Brassey Hole (1846–1917), Rebuilding the Wall of Jerusalem under Nehemiah, from Old Testament History (Eyre & Spottiswoode, c. 1925). Public domain.

Thank you for calling one of our many churches your spiritual home. To the glory of God, you and your families complete our voice of common prayer. And because they do, may our works find favor in God's sight.



The Gathering of the Manna, from the Hours of Catherine of Cleves, c. 1440. Morgan Library & Museum, New York. Public domain.



Georgios Kortezas (active 1620–1645), The Archangels Michael, Gabriel and Raphael, first half of the 17th century. Byzantine Museum of Antivouniotissa, Corfu, Greece. Image by Tzim78, Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 4.0.

THE CELESTIAL INTERCESSION OF THE HOLY ARCHANGELS

By the Dominicans of the Province of St. Joseph
Originally published by Word on Fire, September 29, 2020

The angels in their glorious celestial array are the servants and messengers of God, the "mighty ones who do his word, hearkening to the voice of his word" (Ps 103:20, CCC 329). The spirits surround the throne of God and fill the heavenly courts with their unending song of praise. Sent forth, they carry out their missions of protecting, guiding, and strengthening his people.

Of all the myriads of angels in the service of the Lord, Scripture gives us the names of only three: Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael. Each of these Archangels has a certain privileged place in ministering to the Church, and to each we can attribute a characteristic especially needed in our world today.

St. Michael - Peace

At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people . . . [and] your people will be delivered. (Dan. 12:1)

There is no need to number this year's terrors and tragedies. But our struggle is not with flesh and blood but with the principalities and powers, with the evil spirits in the heavens.

As God commissioned Michael to cast down the rebel angels, so too he can be sent to restore order wherever pride and hatred have threatened justice and truth. Let us beg the Lord to send his champion St. Michael to bring about peace in our world and to help us fight the good fight of the faith.



The Archangel Michael, Public Domain



The Archangel Michael, Public Domain

St. Gabriel - Hope

I am Gabriel, who stand in the presence of God; and I was sent to speak to you, and to bring you this good news. (Luke 1:19)

Although Gabriel appears to the prophet Daniel in the Old Testament, his greatest mission was to announce to the Virgin Mary that she was to be the Mother of God. It was he who had the singular delight to kneel before the chosen vessel of the savior and to exclaim, "Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus" (Luke 1:31). He is the herald preceding the hope of the nations.

Fear and doubt can only be conquered by an ardent love of God, the radiance of a steadfast hope. Life's various trials may test us, but the grace of God helps us to triumph. By the intercession of St. Gabriel, may a reliant hope and abundant faith give us all strength, courage, and joy in the Lord.

St. Raphael - Holiness

It is good to guard the secret of a king, but gloriously to reveal the works of God. Do good, and evil will not overtake you. (Tob. 12:7)

In the Book of Tobit, the archangel Raphael neither appears in glory nor ministers to the noble. He is, rather, the answer to the prayers of two humble families. Raphael, under the guise of a relative, accompanies the young Tobias on a journey that results in many unexpected blessings, not least of which were his marriage to Sarah and the healing of his father's blindness.

God does not hesitate to enter the nitty-gritty parts of our lives in order to make us holy in every moment. May St. Raphael come to our aid and guide us on our journey to heaven. We invoke his patronage in a particular way


The Archangel Raphael and Tobias, Workshop of Neri di Bicci (mid- to late 1460s). Courtesy of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Public domain.

Saints Michael, Gabriel, & Raphael, pray for us.

https://www.wordonfire.org/articles/celestial-intercession/

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THE EVE OF THANKSGIVING DAY MASS

Joining with the Central and Southern Illinois Evangelical Lutheral Church of America

Beginning on the Eve of Thanksgiving Day, November 25th, 2026, the people of the Central and Southern Illinois Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA) will join with the Diocese of Springfield in a service of Holy Eucharist. The service location will alternate yearly between the Cathedral of St. Paul the Apostle and one of the three Springfield Lutheran Congregations (Grace Lutheran Church, Peace Lutheran Church, and St. John's Lutheran Church). The order of service will be according to the tradition of the church in which the Mass is being hosted and will include a combined choir, with the Offering being designated to a local outreach program. These services will provide an excellent opportunity for those of the ELCA and the Diocese of Springfield to join together in fellowship and worship, to the glory of God.

This year's service will be hosted at the Cathedral Church of St. Paul the Apostle in Springfield, IL and will begin at 6:00 PM. Please mark your calendars and plan to join in this service of joint worship.

The Angelus (1857-1859), Jean-François Millet. Public domain.

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