



The Messenger

St. John's Episcopal Church

Springfield, Missouri

April 2025, Issue 141, No. 4



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St. John's Episcopal Church

Bishop Provisional
The Right Reverend Diane M. Jardine Bruce

Interim Rector
The Reverend Ronald Keel

Director of Music
Kevin Grice

Senior Warden
Victor Matthews

Junior Warden
Linda Robertson

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Holy Week Schedule

Palm Sunday, April 13
Sunday, 10:30 a.m. (FBL)

Wednesday in Holy Week, April 13
Mass, 6:00 a.m., Choir, 6:30 p.m.

Maundy Thursday, April 17
Mass & Foot Washing, 7:00 p.m. (FBL)
Watch at the Altar of Repose, 8 -10:00 p.m.
(Sign-up sheet on the bulletin board)

Good Friday, April 18
Stations of the Cross, 9:00 a.m.
Watch at the Altar of Repose resumes, 9:30-11:00 a.m.
Good Friday Liturgy, 12 noon. (FBL)

Holy Saturday, April 19
Holy Saturday Liturgy, 9:00 a.m.

Easter Vigil, April 19
Saturday, 7:30 p.m. (FBL)
Agape Celebration

Easter Sunday, April 20
Mass, 10:30 a.m. (FBL)



Easter Flower Offering

Easter will be arriving on April 20th this year, when Lent ends with the glorious celebration of our Savior's resurrection. A wonderful symbol on this great occasion is the array of Easter lilies that fills our church. Making a donation to supply these flowers is a particularly good way to remember those dear to us who have departed this life to continue with the living Christ. There are special Easter Flower Offering envelopes beside the bulletins at each Saturday and Sunday service for the rest of Lent. Please make your check payable to St. John's Episcopal Church and write "Easter flowers" on the memo line. Your envelope may be mailed to the church, turned in to the office, or placed in the offering plate. This information will be used to prepare the Easter Flowers Offering Booklet. Please submit your envelopes no later than **Monday, April 14.**



From the Interim Rector

Love, Neighbor, and the Gospel in a Time of Change

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength ... and love your neighbor as yourself.” —Mark 12:29-31

Dear Friends in Christ,

We live in uncertain times. Decisions by those in authority ... whether welcomed or worrisome ... can leave us unsettled. But as followers of Jesus, our calling remains unchanged: Love God and love our neighbor.

Throughout Scripture, God reminds us, “Do not be afraid.” Change, especially in public life, often stirs anxiety, but our trust is in God, not in shifting policies or leaders. Our faith calls us not to withdraw, but to engage ... measuring the justice of any change by how it treats the most vulnerable among us.

Loving our neighbor means listening with compassion, advocating for dignity, and standing with those in need. It means praying for wisdom, even as we hold leaders accountable. The Gospel does not promise earthly stability, but it does promise enduring love ... one that calls us to be peacemakers and bearers of hope.

May we go forward in faith, rooted in love, and steadfast in our mission. In loving God and neighbor, all else becomes clear.

Faithfully,
Fr. Ron Keel
Interim Rector

Sacrament of Reconciliation Available

Father Keel is available to hear confessions during Holy Week by appointment though Saturday, April 19th. If you wish to make your confession prior to receiving Easter Communion, please contact Fr. Keel or call the church office to make an appointment.

Outreach Lenten ERD Project and Easter Baskets

As of mid-March, the Outreach Group is pleased to report that our parish’s project for Lent this year is to collect funds for Episcopal Relief and Development’s “Nurture & Nourish the Earliest Learners,” helping young children develop thinking, communication, social, emotional and motor skills through support and learning groups. Parents and caregivers are also provided with education in healthy eating and family play. A \$15 donation assists one child. We hope our parish will be able to help many!

As Easter approaches, we’re also collecting items for the Easter Baskets for our three families, as well as monetary donations. We see a true blessing of faith as our parish steps forward to help those in need whenever possible!

The Green Team

WHERE DOES ALL THAT RECYCLING GO? (IT ISN'T JUST DUMPED IN THE LANDFILL)

Like our St. John's parish, Greene County's Environmental Department is sincerely working on improving the effects humans have on the ecosystem here in the Ozarks. One way is through their optimistic and ever-increasing recycling programs and facilities. On any given day at the Franklin Avenue Recycling location, I see upwards of 10-15 vehicles with individuals unloading separated recycle items, including mattresses, and dumping them into specifically labeled large containers that are monitored by workers, closed when filled to capacity, and switched out with empty containers.

But where does all that carefully sorted recycling go? Glass goes to the yard waste center, is crushed in a basin and then Ripple Glass, a distributor out of Kansas City, picks it up for resale to industries like Corning that can use it to make new bottles or other items.

Plastic and paper go to Midwest Fiber Recycling, a family-owned operation out of Illinois with a facility located here in Springfield that employs 150 people. Because recycling has been a growing trend, with curbside pickup increasingly available for households, Midwest decided to invest in a big way. In 2011, they built the first modern Material Recovery Facility (MRF) in Illinois, which handles materials from Illinois, Iowa and Missouri. The amount of materials it handles has quadrupled since then and, due to expected growth, Midwest is now investing in robotics to sort materials and handle quality control. Robots are meant for high turnover positions "to improve safety, increase material recovery and reduce contamination throughout the operation." Since 1990, Midwest has run facilities in Bloomington/Normal, Peoria, Springfield, Decatur, Champaign/Urbanda and Terre Haute, IN (from a PSA dated 2/9/2023).

Aluminum and tin cans are sent to CMC Recycling, located at 634 E. Phelps Rd., here in Springfield. It has been in business since 1956, and the location has been a scrap yard since 1912. They believe recycling is not a trend, but a necessity. If you take aluminum cans directly to them to donate the cash you would have received to the Boys and Girls Club of Springfield, which they proudly sponsor, they will make a matching donation. They are a leader in the global market and process and ship more than 4 million pounds of metal per year, which is used to make new products and structures all over the world. This is preserving natural resources at its best right here in our own town!

Recycling benefits are decreased disposal costs, job creation that is 10 times the amount of jobs at landfills, and directing materials to the manufacturing supply chain, which ensures a stronger economy. It reduces the need for incineration, along with its associated hazards and energy use, and keeps millions of pounds of materials out of our landfills. The Environmental Department is continually working on building community collaborations with businesses and non-profits, like their partnership with the Victory Mission, that are seeking eco-friendly disposal options. Sounds like a winning combination.

Finally, it is up to us, local citizens, to try much harder to reduce or eliminate wasteful buying of single use items, even if they can be recycled. We should take a tip from our parents' and grandparents' generations. Use and re-use items as much as possible. Wasteful consumerism also impacts inflation, decreasing the value of money. Once upon a time, not so long ago, most people did not have much money, but at the same time, did not consider themselves poor, especially if they lived on a farm. So, if you hear someone saying it's a waste of time to recycle, you have an opportunity to make that a learning moment.

Happy Spring, everyone!!

Fasting, the most neglected means of grace

“And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you” (Matthew 6:16-18).

Entering Holy Week is a good time to once again consider a means of grace John Wesley (Priest, d. 1791) practiced all his adult life. It is an ancient spiritual discipline found in Scripture that is part of Jewish and Christian practice. It is the first thing Jesus did following his baptism by John (Matthew 4:2; Luke 4:2).

Fasting is a powerful means of grace and the most neglected. It is powerful because fasting is a physical self-emptying that connects us with Christ (Philippians 2:7) and opens our hearts to his grace. Fasting is neglected for at least one very good reason: people are naturally reluctant to voluntarily refrain from eating. No one wants to go hungry. Especially when we are bombarded by messages at all times of the day to eat and drink. This is even more reason for followers of Jesus Christ to practice fasting, especially during Holy Week.

Fasting can mean anything from skipping a meal at least once a week to refraining from eating for 24 hours. John Wesley practiced a weekly fast from sundown on Thursday to sundown on Friday. He refrained from eating food while drinking water and tea during the day. On Friday evening he broke the fast with a light meal (broth, bread, and water or tea). During the fast Wesley spent much of the time in prayer and reading Scripture.

There are at least four reasons to practice fasting during Lent and Holy Week.

1. **Jesus did it and taught his disciples to do the same.** Disciples are people who learn from their teacher by emulating him or her. If you are a follower of Jesus, then fasting is a practice you should try. Of course, you must be discerning when taking on a practice that impacts your body and health. If you have a physical condition that is not conducive to fasting, then Wesley recommends another form of fasting known as abstinence. Refrain from eating a favorite food for a time. When you miss the food or drink or habit, take time to pray. The fact that Jesus practiced fasting and taught his disciples to join him tells us that disciples today should also join him.
2. **Fasting reminds us of our dependence upon God and his grace.** When you skip a meal, or two or three, and feel the discomfort of an empty belly you are reminded that your life depends upon food and drink. You cannot live without the produce of the earth and the labor of others to bring the food you need to your table. Christians believe everything we need to live is supplied by God who is the “maker of heaven and earth.” When you fast you are reminded of your dependence upon God and his grace.
3. **Fasting brings you into solidarity with the poor.** Jesus said, “I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me” (Matthew 25:35). He identified himself with the people of the world who are hungry and thirsty; the ones who are compelled to fast because they have no food. When you fast you share, for a time, in their suffering. When you share in the suffering of the poor, you share in the continuing suffering of Christ who calls you to join him in his mission setting the world right.
4. **Fasting is time for prayer.** Fasting and prayer go together. When you feel the ache in your belly telling you of your need for God and his grace, you are reminded to stop and pray. Fasting is a time of self-emptying to make room for God. It tells you that God wants your heart, soul, mind, *and* prayer is more than an exercise of the mind. It involves the whole self because God wants your whole self to participate in his mission in the world. Fasting awakens you to the needs of the world and reminds you that God loves you because you are part of the world he has made. We fast because the world is broken. Fasting and prayer helps us to hear and see what God hears and sees every day.

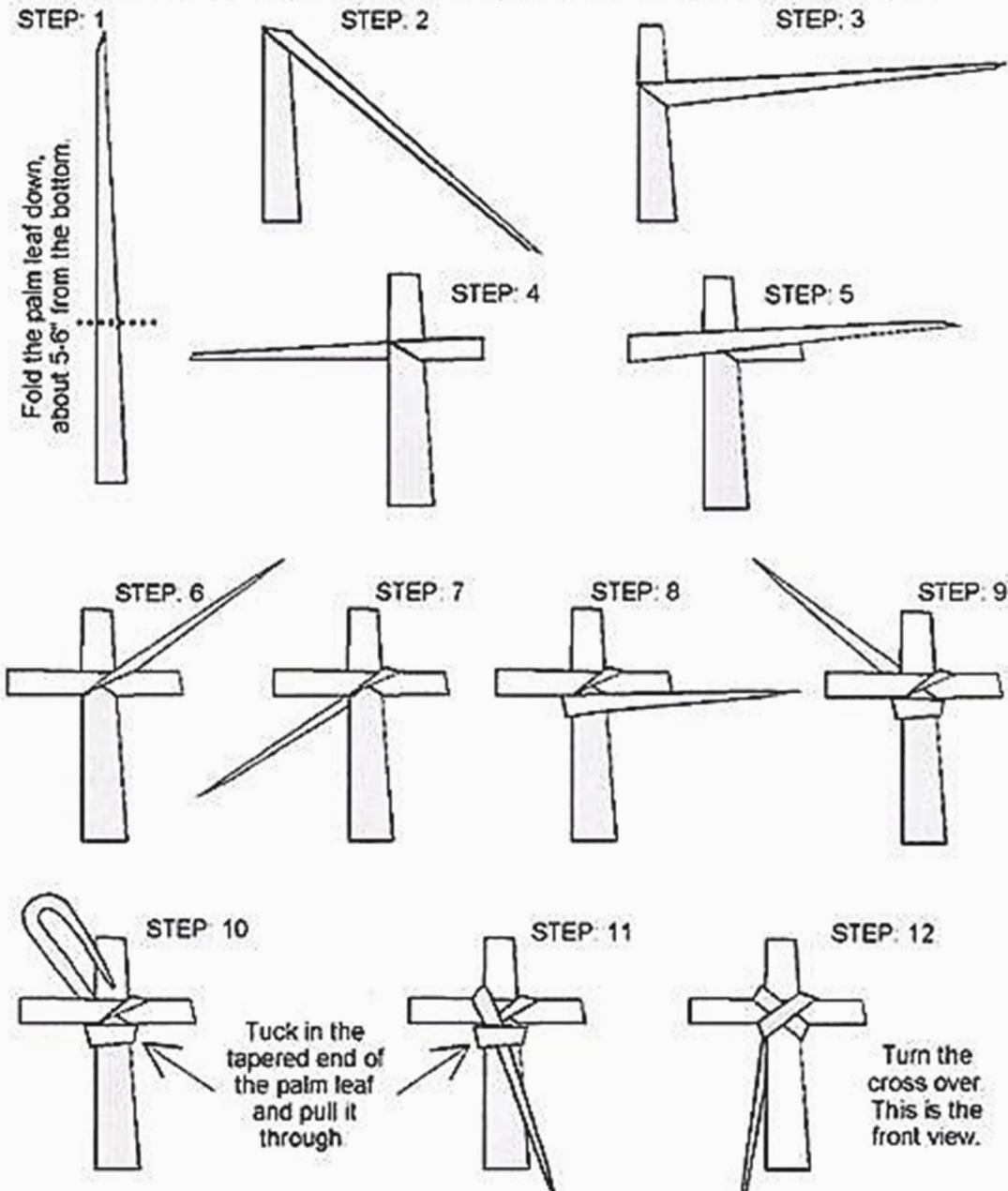
Holy Week is a good time to add a fast to your regular acts of devotion. From Maundy Thursday dusk to Good Friday dusk refrain from eating solid food. Take only water, coffee, or tea. When you feel hungry during the day, stop to pray for the world, the church, and yourself. If your health prevents you from such a fast, then abstain from your favorite food or habit. When you miss the food or habit take time to pray. You could also set aside money for the cost of the meals you miss and give the money from your skipped meals to Ozark Food Harvest, Crosslines, or other hunger ministry.

By Steve Manskar

This article originally appeared in *Discipleship Ministries UMC* in February 2015 and is reprinted with permission, with minimal editing for context and clarity. Original article is available at <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/blog/fasting-the-most-neglected-means-of-grace>.

Diagram - How to Make a Palm Cross

Supplies: One palm leaf strip about 24-26" in length, 1/2" in width, tapering to the end.



From The Green Team

To celebrate Earth Day, Treecologist Basil Camu has generously agreed to give a special presentation!

Please invite your biodiversity-curious friends, family, and colleagues! This is the perfect event to inspire them to take their first steps in restoring nature.

[From Wasteland to Wonder](#)

Easy Ways We Can Help Heal Earth In the Sub/Urban Landscape
April 17th, 12:00 - 1:30 pm EDT

Our current landscaping practices work against nature by destroying ecosystems, polluting water, and wasting time and money. By choosing to work with nature, we can restore beauty, resilience, and biodiversity instead!

In this talk, you'll learn

- How plants, soil, water, and air interact to support life
- Simple steps to heal the Earth: protect trees, plant saplings, and replace lawns with native plants
- Community-driven solutions, such as growing and giving away native trees

There will be an opportunity for Q&A.

This presentation is based on the book [From Wasteland to Wonder](#). Download your free eBook to begin exploring natural systems.

Learn more about [Basil Camu](#) and his tree care company, [Leaf and Limb](#).

[Register for the Webinar](#)

A recording of the event will be available through May 16th, 2025 for those who register.

St. John's Episcopal Church
515 E. Division St.
Springfield, MO 65803

Return Service Requested

The Messenger
a Newsletter of
St. John's Church

Remembering Special Dates & People

Birthdays

Apr. 1 James Scott
Apr. 2 Susan Danielsson
Apr. 5 Kelly Evans
Elizabeth Wilkinson
Apr. 6 Michael Cardwell
Thomas Strothkamp
Apr. 9 Evelyn Ledgerwood
Apr. 10 Laura Mothersead
Apr. 15 Aubry Heydt
Apr. 16 April Becker
Carol Matthews
Apr. 19 Mark Bowers
David Jones
Jill Vahldick
Apr. 20 Gates Samaniego
Apr. 21 Christie Bilbo
Samuel Dafazio
Elizabeth Mothersead
Elyse Shippy
Gavin Shippy
Apr. 22 Jesse Lee Butler
Karen Horny
Apr. 23 Tyler Crane
Grayson Shippy
Apr. 24 Cathy Ryder
Apr. 25 Colton Iott
Rex Porterfield
Apr. 26 Barbara Jones
Lori Woolery

Apr. 28 Lora Newman
Apr. 30 Cheryl Moon

Anniversaries

Apr. 19 Dennis & Stephanie Blevins
Apr. 23 Gregory & Candace Iott

Faithful Departed

Apr. 2 Hugo Horny
Apr. 4 Walt Harmon
Apr. 5 Joseph E. Cox, Jr.
Rebecca Lohman
Apr. 6 Dorothy Hayden
Apr. 10 Gwendolyn Van Hook
Apr. 11 Effie Leedy Benjamin
Kenneth Hall
Kathleen Walstrand
Apr. 12 Arlyn C. Cozad
Apr. 13 Violet Clark Beauchamp
Apr. 15 Ray Follis
Fern E. Meyers
Russell Haney
Apr. 16 Dana W. King
Apr. 17 Charlotte Ollis
Helen Stone
Apr. 20 Mary Shipe
Donald Addison Wingo
Apr. 21 Hester G. Ollis
Apr. 22 Jone Gerboth
Apr. 23 Seamus Mulvahill
Apr. 26 Freda Kennedy
Leonard L. Reddick
Felix White
Apr. 27 Clayton Braig
Jerry Iott
Apr. 28 Al Bickerstaff
John Fendlason
Apr. 29 Benjamin Wright
Ruth Irene Leigh
Apr. 30 Eva Sue Ward