



The Messenger

St. John's Episcopal Church

Springfield, Missouri

May 2025, Issue 141, No. 5



Ascension Day Mass & Picnic!

At Saint John's it has been the custom for many years to have a parish picnic after the Ascension Day Mass. This year it will be on Thursday, May 29! The Mass will begin at 6:00 p.m. Following the Eucharist, a picnic will be held in the parish hall. A sign-up sheet is posted on the bulletin board. Parishioners are asked to bring a side dish to share. Drinks will be provided. Plan now to celebrate with joy the Ascension of Our Lord!

In This Issue

- † From the Interim Rector
- † Remember those who suffer for Christ
- † Nurturing Your Spiritual Health
- † Outreach Ministry Group
- † Women's Medical Respite
- † Treasures in Heaven
- † Crisis Cold Weather Shelters in Springfield
- † Remembering Special Dates and People

Watch the Consecration of Bishop Meaux

Join us in the parish hall to watch the live-streamed consecration of Bishop Amy Dafler Meaux

at Grace & Holy Trinity Cathedral in Kansas City.

The event starts at 10:00 a.m. plan to arrive by 9:45 a.m. so you won't miss a minute of this special occasion of

The Diocese of West Missouri.

St. John's Episcopal Church

Bishop

The Right Reverend Amy Dafler Meaux

Interim Rector

The Reverend Ronald Keel

Director of Music

Kevin Grice

Senior Warden

Victor Matthews

Junior Warden

Linda Robertson

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On the Lighter Side

One Sunday in church a little boy took off his tie and put it into the offering plate.

"What are you doing?" asked the mother.

"What the minister said," answered the little boy.

"He told us to give our ties and offerings."

From the Interim Rector

Grace and peace to you from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

As we embrace the joyous season of Easter, I warmly greet you and proclaim with you: **“Alleluia, Christ is Risen!”** To which we respond, **“The Lord is Risen, Indeed!”**

These words of acclamation resonate throughout our worship services during the Easter season ... a season that extends beyond Easter Sunday, encompassing 50 days of celebration. This period allows us to reflect on the numerous appearances of Jesus to His disciples and followers, culminating in His Ascension into Heaven to join the Heavenly Father.

Easter is the “feast of feasts,” a time when we celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, through which death is defeated, sin is conquered, and evil is vanquished. We are granted 50 days to immerse ourselves in the glory of Easter a necessary span to begin to grasp the profound mystery and majesty of Jesus emerging from the tomb on Easter morning.

On Good Friday, it seemed as though the powers of the world had extinguished God’s perfect love. Yet, on Easter morning, the discovery of the empty tomb revealed that love’s triumph. The women who found the tomb shared the news with the disciples, who soon encountered the Risen Lord themselves. Witnessing His promises fulfilled, they spread the word, igniting a movement that has reached millions, all drawn to the transformative power of God’s love in Jesus Christ.

The Easter season reminds us that this event changes everything ... not only for Jesus but for us and the entire universe. It offers us 50 days to celebrate and to cultivate new habits that embody an Easter life.

Please join us at St. John’s Episcopal Church as we continue to celebrate Easter and the new life granted to us through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Happy Easter. “Alleluia, Christ is Risen!” “The Lord is Risen, Indeed!”

Faithfully,
Fr. Ron Keel
Interim Rector

Remember those who suffer for Christ. Heb 13:3



In the March *Messenger* I asked my St. John's church family to increase prayers and awareness about the persecution of Christians which is occurring in 2025. How has that been working out for you?

I have spent hours doing on-line research and will share some of it with you.

Both *Open Doors World Watch List* and *Violent Incident Database* by *International Institute for Religious Freedom* provided statistics. They track persecutions which have been sorted into 12 types -- including prison sentences, abductions, forced marriages, attacks on homes or churches, killings, and more. Primarily they monitor 50 countries. In 2024 there were 4,744 prison sentences imposed on Christians for their faith; while 4,476 Christians were martyred because of their beliefs. Much more data is available from these Non-Government Organizations.

All of these numbers are staggering. Each impacts the person, family, and community in which that violent incident occurred.

I have several suggestions.

- 1) **Pray regularly.** Religious Liberty Partnership will supply websites for many of the NOG, with a number offering Prayer Guides.
- 2) **Select a country or type of persecution** and do some reading on that topic to better **focus** your prayers as you beseech God for these suffering Christian sisters and brothers.
- 3) There may be some **“political” actions** you can take such as signing a petition or contacting your congressperson about the persecution of Christians.

Personally, I am overwhelmed by the persecutions occurring in my country of birth, Nigeria. During April, more than 183 Christians were murdered in the region where I lived as a child, along with 7,000 people displaced.

The IDP camps in Nigeria are run by the government; so many of the homeless go to stay with their relatives. These families were not prepared for long term visitors. They ran out of food, hygiene items and other basic supplies. A Nigerian lady, Euphemia, who is my Facebook friend tells me, “We are all hungry”! And yet, ... I watch videos on facebook of Church services with singing and praise to God.

In Gaza when non-combatants are injured or killed, the media is immediately vocal about it demanding accountability. But in Nigeria, and Sudan, and Congo non-combatants are killed daily and the press is not concerned and does not cover it! Why? Is it because they are poor? Or because they are black people? Or because they are Christians? Or maybe because the media and governments are unwilling to say openly it is the evil deeds of “Jihad”?

There must be an outcry from the world insisting that Nigeria protect it's innocent Christian citizens.

How can we here in the United States support the suffering people of Nigeria? You can write or phone your Congressman. Ask him to support or cosponsor House Bill 220 which would designate Nigeria as a Country of Particular Concern for human rights and religious violations. (HB 220)

Once Nigeria is a Country of Particular Concern then the Department of State can begin Sanctions which will inform the Nigerian government that the world is watching and they need to protect ALL of their citizens.

Joyce Schmidt

Nurturing Your Spiritual Health: A Checkup for Seniors*

Just as we monitor our physical health through regular checkups, our spiritual well-being deserves the same attention. As we age, our inner lives often take on new dimensions of meaning and purpose. This spiritual checkup offers a framework to reflect on your spiritual health and identify areas for growth.

Finding Meaning and Purpose

- What gives your life meaning now?
- How have your sources of purpose shifted since retirement?
- Which activities make you feel most alive and connected?

Many find that purpose evolves naturally—from career achievements to mentoring others, creative pursuits, or simply being present for loved ones.

Spiritual Practices

- Do you have regular practices that bring peace?
- Are there traditions you miss or new practices you'd like to explore?
- How do you nurture your spirit daily?

Whether through prayer, meditation, nature walks, or contemplative reading, finding practices that resonate with you now can bring deep joy.

Community and Connection

- Are you spiritually connected to others?
- Do you experience loneliness, or feel connected even when alone?
- Who nourishes your soul?

Consider volunteering, joining discussion groups, or reconnecting with old friends to strengthen your sense of belonging.

Life Review and Legacy

- What experiences have been spiritually significant?
- Are there unresolved issues weighing on your spirit?
- What wisdom do you hope to pass on?

Sharing your life lessons, either through conversation or writing, can be profoundly meaningful both for you and future generations.

Inner Peace

- How do you handle uncertainty about aging?
- What practices help you find stillness?
- Are you at peace with where you are in life?

Many seniors discover that practicing gratitude and mindfulness helps navigate life's challenges with greater equanimity.

Spiritual Connection

- How do you experience the sacred in daily life?
- Does your faith support you during difficult times?
- Do you have spiritual questions you're exploring?

Remember that spiritual connection naturally ebbs and flows—if you feel distant, gentle re-engagement through familiar practices often helps.

Cultivating Joy

- What brings you wonder and gratitude?
- How might you incorporate more moments of joy into each day?
- What simple pleasures make you feel alive?

A daily habit of recognizing small joys—whether a sunrise, conversation, or good meal—can transform your experience of life.

Looking Ahead

- Have you shared your spiritual wishes with loved ones?
- What kind of support would help you in the coming years?
- How might you continue growing spiritually as circumstances change?

Thoughtful conversations about the future can bring peace of mind and ensure your values are honored throughout your journey.

Final Thoughts

A spiritual checkup isn't about perfection but awareness. By reflecting on these questions, you strengthen connections to yourself, others, and whatever you hold sacred. Aging is a profound journey—by tending to your spirit, you ensure this chapter of life is fully and richly lived.

*This article is modified from one appearing in SpiritualSeniors.com

Philip Mothersead

Outreach Ministry Group

During Lent, our congregation raised funds for ERD's "Nurture & Nourish the Earliest Learners" campaign to help young children develop thinking, communication, social, emotional and motor skill through support and learning groups.

Members of the Outreach group shopped for the perishable Easter items with extra donated funds and delivered trunk loads of groceries, household cleaning and personal hygiene materials on Good Friday to the 3 families we continue to support. The families were very appreciative.

In May, we are working with the Crosslines Community Outreach to provide gifts and supplies for birthday parties for eligible families. For "Wish I May," we are collecting NEW items they have requested for children ages 1-15, especially birthday plates & napkins, board books and other children's books and birthday banners and decorations.

There are always numerous opportunities to provide needed assistance for others!

Women's Medical Respite

The Women's Medical Respite will be holding a Garage Sale the last weekend of May to benefit our ladies. Please consider donating new or gently used items to our sale. We will be collecting items on Wednesday, 5/28 or Thursday, 5/29 from 2:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m. at the address below.

When: Friday & Saturday

May 30th-31st

8:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

(both days!)

Where: 4129 E. Linwood St.

Springfield, MO 65809

If you would like to contribute and other arrangements are necessary, please contact our WMR board president, Jan Weiss, at (417)234-4303. Also, don't forget to come by and shop on the days of the sale, and bring your friends! All proceeds support WMR operations.

Treasures in Heaven

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus tells to “store up for yourselves treasures in heaven.” (Matthew 6:20). What are treasures in heaven? Someone once said that the only things we can take to heaven are the things we’ve returned to God. Words on an old gravestone read: “What I spent, I used; what I saved, I lost; what I gave, I have.” Obviously, this person had much wisdom. He realized that, during his life, only that which was given to the Lord had any lasting value. The things that he had purchased while alive were used up and gone, and the possessions he owned at death were of no good to him now.

We lay up treasures in heaven when we love and help others. Helping others involves our time, abilities, and money. When we give cheerfully to God through our church, we store up treasures for ourselves in heaven. As the epitaph said, “What I gave, I have.” God is blessed and honored through our faithful giving. When we are ministering to others, we are doing the work of the Lord and making investments for eternity. All that we do in Christ’s name for him stores up treasures in heaven.

Prayer: Father, grant me faith to store up treasures in heaven. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

Crisis Cold Weather Shelters in Springfield

Every winter, overnight Crisis Cold Weather Shelters (CCWS) open in our community to provide emergency shelter beds for homeless neighbors. Homelessness includes people sleeping overnight in shelters, vehicles, temporary housing not their own, and camping. Local residents lose housing throughout the year due to eviction, job loss, domestic conflict, and unforeseen fires and weather events. Over 3,000 people in Greene County reported some level of housing insecurity in 2024. Most were employed full- or part-time during the last 6 months. We have a few year-round shelters at Safe to Sleep, Salvation Army, and Victory Mission. During the 2023-2024 winter, CCWS sites were open for 52 nights and provided 10,187+ bed nights. These shelters save lives and would not be possible without the dedication of the host sites themselves, community volunteers who give of their time, and other partners like the City of Springfield and City Utilities of Springfield. CCWS provides shelter for 150-185 on most cold nights but reaches a capacity of 300 with emergency shelters during extreme cold. To help meet the critical need for volunteers, the Ozarks Alliance to End Homelessness is challenging businesses, churches, civic organizations, and other groups to engage by volunteering and/or donating funds, supplies, or space. For more information about these needs contact, OAEH@CPOzarks.org

Volunteers are critically needed for a variety of roles with CCWS sites; not only staying overnight, but also helping to serve meals, deliver supplies, and transport pets. Depending on the number of guests, about 13-16 volunteers are needed each night. Overnight Monitors are needed from 7:30 pm to 7:30 am (sleep time is available). Evening Set Up and Check-In Assistants are needed to set up the shelter prior to guest arrival, serve hot drinks and snacks, and welcome the overnight guests. Also needed are Laundry Runners who pick up laundry (sheets, blankets, and pillowcases) for transport to the cleaners in the morning and return clean laundry in the evening. In the morning, Morning Check-out Assistants are needed to serve hot drinks and snacks and help put away cots and clean up. A Cleaning Crew is needed in the morning after cots and bedding are put away to clean the floors, restrooms, hospitality area, and take out the trash. Thus, many hands make this so much easier and safer for all concerned. Most positions only require an hour or two of your time. The Ozarks Alliance to End Homelessness has a sign-up interest form online at cpozarks.org.

Ian Lindevald and Cindy Cooper have volunteered over the past two winters by providing Pet Transport to The Fairbanks, which is the only gender-neutral shelter that also accepts pets. Couples can stay together, and we transport pets (12-15 dogs) that are not service animals. We collect the dogs at the Veterans Coming Home center in the evening, transport to The Fairbanks, and transport back to the Veterans Coming Home Center in the morning. Pet owner guests are transported to the shelter by City Utilities buses, but only Service Animals are allowed on the buses. Ideally, we need at least 3 cars, SUV, or mini vans, but we often have only one or two. Each animal is placed in a crate, provided by The Fairbanks, for transport. If

you have extra animal crates, large or small, we could use more for the volunteers to keep in their cars overnight.

CCWS open when the overnight outdoor temperature falls at or below 32F for 4 hours or more. This standard may vary depending on the amount of snowfall and windchill factors. The decision to open a shelter is made by the Community Partnership of the Ozarks (CPO) and often hinges on whether or not a given shelter has enough volunteers and staff to manage the space. CPO opens a few shelters every cold night and opens a few additional Emergency Shelters for the most bitterly cold nights. St. John's Episcopal Church offers 10 beds for men on an emergency basis.

Another way to help is by donating cold weather clothing and outdoor survival items which can be donated at The Connecting Grounds (TCG) at 3000 W Chestnut Expressway. TCG is a year-round point of contact for anyone finding themselves without shelter. Other useful items include sturdy tote bags and backpacks. TCG posts a link to an Amazon shopping site with a list of their most urgent needs by season at TheConnectingGrounds.com. TCG provides street level outreach in both winter (colder than 40F) and summer (hotter than 95F) to provide hand warmers, food and water, and rides to the shelters.

For warmer weather, think camp gear, especially tarps for shelter from rain. A handful of churches provide evening meals throughout Springfield: typically, one site each weeknight. More sites are needed on the north side of Springfield. During warmer seasons, the parking lot is ideal for a weeknight meal, which can be hot or cold items. Brown bag meals can be handed out at a scheduled time each week from the parking lot. By staying in touch with local shelter coordinators, emergency needs such as food, clothing, and shelter can be met in real time.

If you have any questions or items to donate, please contact Cindy Cooper (417-353-9495) or Ian Lindevald (660-349-9631). Credits for most details go to cpozarks.org and Ashley Quinn, Sabbatical Pastor and Justice Coordinator at National Avenue Christian Church.



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

May 1 Makayla Strickland
May 3 Timothy Wilkinson
May 6 Sarah Hosutt
May 7 Jeanine Jones
May 8 Jana Daniel
May 9 Reagan Walstrand
May 10 Theodore Kelley
Sandy Reese
May 11 Sarah Baker
Oliver Junod
May 13 Nicholas Greer
May 14 Amber Cash
Jeremiah Moorhead
May 15 Kathryn Follis
Cinnamon Smith
May 16 Janice Jones
Angie Patterson
May 17 Anthony Gamel
May 18 Mark Lathrom
May 21 Alnita Mulvihill
May 24 Tom Mulvihill
May 25 David Allred
Josh Brandon-Vicory
May 26 Ben Patterson
May 27 Clara Busch
Dan Kesterson
May 29 John Blomberg
Rob Close
May 31 Joe Marshall

Anniversaries

May 2 Chris & Tanya Roop
May 10 Nick & Terry Greer
Richard & Teresa Ollis
May 12 Fr. Jim & Cheryl Moon
Chris & Joyce Nelson
Dcn. Constance Tyndall (Ordination)
May 18 Keith & Jeanine Jones
May 21 David & Kim Westervelt
May 25 Jonny & Latesa Carter
May 29 Joe & Mary Marshall
May 31 Mark & Adele O'Dell

Faithful Departed

May 1 Jo Ann Wilhoit
May 2 Arthur Albers
John Holliday
May 4 William A. Moon
May 6 Harry Holden
Mildred M. Phillips
May 8 Eva Aldrich
May 9 Einar Jacobson, Jr.
Robert E. Leigh
May 10 Michael Follis
Mary Virginia Langsford
May 13 Ricky "Mountain" Phipps
May 14 William B. Lincoln
May 17 Joseph D. Wingo
May 19 Eva Aileen Ollis
Warren Simons
May 20 Connie Nowak
May 21 Daisy Cravens
Fred Smith Lines
May 22 Terry Bremer
R. Fred Schweitzer
May 24 Richard Cooper
Robert Ewing, Jr.
May 25 Kenneth L. Bear
Maria LeDuc
Delores Roberts
May 28 Billy JoDean "Joe" Reese
May 29 Ronald Daniel
Mary Sue Fendlason
May 30 William Ryder
May 31 Samuel L. Coover