



# CHURCH *Life*

THE MAGAZINE OF THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF OHIO  
SUMMER 2020 • VOLUME 124 • NUMBER 2



## COVER:

Numerous congregations in the Diocese of Ohio are continuing their critical food ministries during the coronavirus pandemic. Some have adapted by providing drive-through and takeout options.

## THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

### IN THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION

A global community of over 80 million members in 44 regional and national member churches.

**The Most Rev. Justin Welby**

*Archbishop of Canterbury*

### IN THE UNITED STATES

A community of more than 2 million members in 110 dioceses in the Americas and abroad.

Established 1789.

**The Most Rev. Michael Bruce Curry**

*Presiding Bishop*

### IN THE DIOCESE OF OHIO

A community of 16,000 baptized members in 84 parishes in the northern 48 counties of the State of Ohio. Established 1817.

### BISHOP OF OHIO

**The Rt. Rev. Mark Hollingsworth, Jr.**

### CHURCH LIFE MAGAZINE

E-mail: [churchlife@dohio.org](mailto:churchlife@dohio.org)

The Rt. Rev. Mark Hollingsworth, Jr., *Publisher*

Jessica Rocha, *Editor & Designer*

Beth Bergstrom, *Assistant Editor*

©Church Life! Magazine (ISSN 8750-8613)

Published four times per year in

March, June, September, and December

by The Episcopal Diocese of Ohio

2230 Euclid Avenue

Cleveland, OH 44115-2499

Postmaster: Send change of address to

Church Life Magazine

2230 Euclid Avenue

Cleveland, OH 44115

Periodicals postage paid at Cleveland, OH

and at additional mailing offices.

Member of the Episcopal Communicators.

### IMPORTANT

All households of the Diocese of Ohio should receive Church Life Magazine. If you are not currently receiving it, or if you need to change your delivery address, please contact the Communications Office with your name, address, and parish.

Phone: 216.774.0445

E-mail: [churchlife@dohio.org](mailto:churchlife@dohio.org)



# Certain Thoughts

In the fourth chapter of *Les Misérables*, Victor Hugo wrote, “Certain thoughts are prayers. There are moments when, whatever be the attitude of the body, the soul is on its knees.”

During the last two months, these words have repeatedly come to mind. Whatever the everyday physical attitude and activities of our lives, our souls have had the posture and practice of prayer. Throughout our comings and goings and mostly staying in place, many of our thoughts in this corona-time are, naturally, pandemic-focused: we are anxious about contagion, being exposed and exposing others; we are concerned for the health and safety of family, friends, co-workers, parishioners, and others; we worry about how long this will last, what its effect on the economy will be, and what the church will be like moving forward; we fear how our communities and our politics will be affected and how we will treat one another, both friends and strangers; and we yearn for stability, certainty, and physical presence.

All of these anxieties, concerns, worries, fears, and yearnings are not simply thoughts confined to our minds and occasional conversations with others. They are, in fact, prayers, whether by conscious intention or not. Each is heard by God, advocated by Jesus on our behalf, and acted upon by the spirit of holiness, the counselor and comforter who, Jesus promises, is with us always.

In the restricted lifestyle imposed on us by this time of reduced social contact and more “essential” living, the ability to experience our thoughts as prayers may be more available to us than it was even a couple of months ago. The slower pace and comparatively limited horizon of our daily lives may offer a more contemplative context for reflection. The increased occasions of solitude that come with stay-at-home mandates connect me with the introspective disciplines of my Quaker heritage. (My first direct ancestors to immigrate to the New World were Quakers who arrived in 1682 and settled what is now Newark, Delaware.)

Perhaps it is simply that, in the midst of this pandemic, we are more aware that the questions we ponder are greater and more numerous than the answers we find and, in the solitude between Zoom meetings or the absence of previous distractions, our minds and hearts have room for things we have long neglected or forgotten. The category of “those we love,” for example, seems to grow daily for me; people for whom I care come to mind as if returning from a long voyage. It is as though God has finally found a little clearing in my consciousness and placed a treasured person or past event there. I find myself thinking, “I wonder how so-and-so is,” and realize that it is not a thought, in fact, but a prayer.

In this novel time, I seem more able to recognize in people and events the invitation of the Creator or the companionship of Jesus or the agency of the Holy Spirit in ways I confess I have grown neglectful of or inured to. Again, these revelations seem not to be random thoughts but answers to the prayer I suspect my kneeling soul is constantly asking, “Where is God in all of this?”

As much as you and I might long to return to whatever was our familiar norm, it is increasingly clear that that will not be possible. Equally clear is that, wherever this changed reality leads us, God is already there waiting for us, like the risen Jesus waiting in the Galilee for his disciples, already doing for us, as St. Paul described in his letter to the Ephesians, “infinitely more than we can ask or imagine.” The opportunity of this moment, as it is always, is to open our spirits to the Christ who promises to be with us always, even to the end of the ages, and actively to seek his presence in all that we do. The spiritual posture for that is the discipline of prayer, or as Hugo wrote, the soul on its knees.

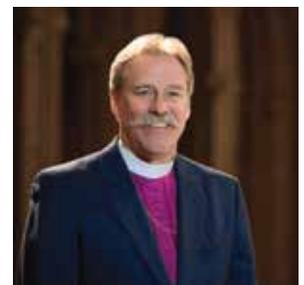
In this special issue of *Church Life*, we have invited a number of communicants from around the Diocese to share their observations of where they find God in all of this. Their “certain thoughts” are generously shared with the hope that we, in reading them, might understand our own reflections on this extraordinary time to be acts of prayer, the ongoing conversation with the divine through which we reveal our mortal selves to God and God reveals the eternal self to us. Their spiritual reflections on work and family and church, on how their routines have been rerouted and their priorities reordered, are offered as vehicles to invite and inspire our own and be drawn deeper into the presence of the one who makes all things new.

If you feel so moved, please consider gathering your own spiritual reflections in 300 to 500 words and submit them to Jessica Rocha at [jrocha@dohio.org](mailto:jrocha@dohio.org). We will gather them together as an archival record of this time of social and ecclesial change, to be shared with generations to come.

For these contributors’ companionship and yours, I am very grateful.



The Rt. Rev. Mark Hollingsworth, Jr.  
Bishop of Ohio



# Reflections During the Coronavirus Pandemic

**Steven Simpkins**  
Old Trinity, Tiffin

"O, You who are ever giving life to all life, moving all creatures, root of all things, washing them clean, wiping out their mistakes, healing their wounds, You are our true life, luminous, wonderful, awakening the heart from its ancient sleep," – Hildegard of Bingen

In today's fast-paced, technology driven, instant gratification world people usually have a few safe-havens wherein the existence of time ceases to matter. One of these locales for some folks is church. The activity and space of church represents the opportunity to be wholly present, undistracted, and amid the world's chaos find some inner and communal peace. So, what happens when the activity of church becomes inviable and socially irresponsible due to a health pandemic? We are left to ask ourselves an age-old question: where is God? This time of quarantine has illumined a particularly pernicious issue with which many people, regardless of how faithful, regularly struggle. How do we encounter God in our daily lives? There is a convenience to attending church. Church provides a pre-programmed scheduled visit with God. People attend with the intention of being in tune with their spirituality. Quarantine provides an opportunity to commune with God in new, unexpected, unconventional, life-giving ways.

God is present, but are we? Is there intentionality behind our actions or are we simply going through the motions? Since the beginning of self-isolation and quarantining, I have been more intentionally reflective about where God might be in my daily environment. For me, this practice has a few emotional swings to it depending on my temperament that day. I vacillate between frustrated that I didn't seem to notice anything, amazed at some incredibly minor detail, goofy for reading into something probably insignificant, comforted by my surroundings, and more. Overall, this practice has reduced the stress and anxiety I feel despite it leaving me wondering where God is at times.



Toward the beginning of Ohio's stay-at-home order, I felt particularly depressed and anxious about financial uncertainty. As a result, I turned to challenging myself to make a new recipe as a way of distracting myself from my anxieties for a couple of hours. The recipe called for making fresh home-made cheese. As the milk was warming I left the kitchen for a few minutes. I returned to a surprise. For the first time ever, my cat decided to hop on top of the stovetop and stick her head right in the warm pot. She's always been curious but in two years had never been so brazen. I shook my head, laughed, and removed her from the stove. I immediately chalked it up to God's presence. From my lens, this was a moment wherein God was inviting me to have a sense of humor; to remember there is joy in living. This moment has helped sustain me during the quarantine. It was a moment reminding me that God is present in all creatures and is "our true life, luminous, wonderful, awakening the heart from its ancient sleep."

## Sara Yunghans

St. Michael's in the Hills, Toledo

I'll never forget the first time I heard the word coronavirus. I was sitting in a staff meeting and thought it was some sort of joke related to the alcoholic beverage and its after effects. I remember a light discussion with phrases such as "we're keeping an eye on it" and "it'll probably blow over by the new year." Never would I have anticipated the gravity this word would eventually have on our lives or its effects on my physical and spiritual world.

A bit of background to help with the context of my story: I am a doctor of physical therapy in Toledo, specializing in pelvic health. I moved here from Kansas City with my then-husband in the summer of 2018 to be a part of initiating a program addressing women's pelvic health in Northwest Ohio. Since moving to Ohio, I have experienced two miscarriages, two additional moves, the death of a father-figure, job transitions, and a divorce. My clinic closed following government mandates and the luxury of a steady income was lost. And out of arrogance and pride, I believed I could hold it all together.

Then came the cough.

It was minor but annoying and I brushed it off as allergies. A few days later I woke up with a fever and chills. I could hardly move, I didn't want to eat or drink. A call into the employee health line at work informed me I did not qualify for a test for the virus but would have to be quarantined for at least two weeks. It hit me harder than I wanted to admit: I was alone. No husband, no family, no one to physically care for me. It was at this lowest point I had a moment of clarity: recalling the poem "Footprints," I began to understand I was not walking alone, but was being carried. I realized I did not and do not have the strength alone to process and heal from the spiritual and emotional wounds of the past two years. I believe God had to take away my ability to mask my pain with work and normal daily living to get my attention and begin to heal me. I stopped panicking and stopped trying to fix everything that wasn't going my way. I started asking what I was supposed to be learning from my trials and truly understanding that my strength lies in Him.

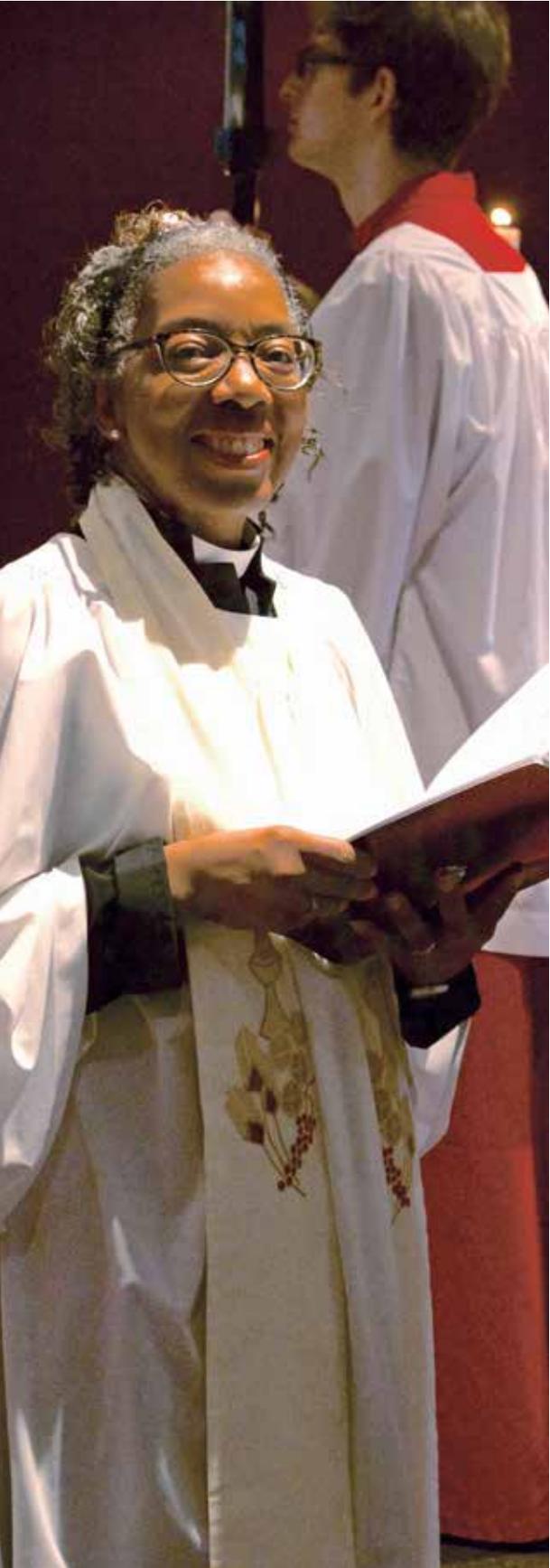
God has blessed me in innumerable ways. I have a wonderfully supportive family back in Missouri and have friends here I thank God for every day. Two of these friends began insisting (read: instructed) I return to attending church regularly and graciously invited me to their church at St. Michael's in the Hills, Toledo. The congregation has been so warm and welcoming. I am reminded every Sunday of the miracle of Christ's love and how we are called to share that love, especially in the face of a pandemic. I am in awe of the way the church has ensured there remains a strong connection within the congregation and provided so many resources to continue to minister and spiritually feed His flock.

I have also been blessed with a physical recovery from the virus. It has been almost four weeks since the onset of my symptoms. I still occasionally cough and tire easily but am truly fortunate to be back to full function. I would say my routine is "normal" again, but it isn't. And I don't want it to be. I want to remember that dark time when all I had was God. I want to remember how it felt to be vulnerable and how wonderful it felt to regain my trust in Him.

We took so much for granted before this upheaval. Let's not forget this. Let's continue to be kinder to each other, more patient, and compassionate. Take care of each other and yourselves.

*"When this is over, may we never again take for granted a handshake with a stranger, full shelves at the store, conversations with neighbors, a crowded theater, Friday night out, the taste of communion, a routine checkup, a school rush each morning, coffee with a friend, the stadium roaring, each deep breath, a boring Tuesday, life itself. When this ends, may we find that we have become more like the people we wanted to be, we were called to be, we hoped to be. And may we stay that way—better for each other because of the worst." - Laura Kelly Fanucci*





**The Rev. Debra Bennett**  
Our Saviour, Akron

For me this has been a time of solitude. I have spent many mornings walking my neighborhood enjoying the blossoming trees and shrubs, the chirping of the birds, and the amazingly beautiful clear blue sky. I've enjoyed the quietness and solitude of those morning walks, just me and my thoughts. As I walk, I have been mindful of the blessings of my life and of this time. I have been aware of a burgeoning spirit of gratitude. This time has accorded me more time for meaningful conversation with my father and brother. Given that they live in New York, in the epicenter of this pandemic, instead of our normal once a week check with each other, we have been chatting pretty much every other day. I am grateful for that. I am grateful for the lives of dear friends and family who have survived their COVID-19 related illness. I am grateful for having had my life kissed by those whose lives have succumbed to the ravages of this virus or continue to fight for their lives.

Like most in this country and around the world, I am grateful and pray for those who tend to the sick every day in myriad ways. This spirit of gratitude flows into the way in which the people of Church of Our Saviour have remained the body of Christ for each other and those who have joined in our Sunday morning Zoom worship, our Tuesday evening Zoom check-ins and compline, or have come for dinner or groceries to go. Yes, in the quiet of the morning there is not only a spirit of gratitude, but there is also a peacefulness in my soul.

In this time of solitude, I have noted a peacefulness in my spirit, perhaps it is that peace which passes understanding, that has kept me centered, grounded, non-anxious and able to live in the moment. In my life, my faith has always informed my response to situations. Through this time, I have taken to heart the word from Philippians 4: "Be anxious for nothing but by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be known to God and the peace of God which passes understanding will keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus." And that from Psalm 27: "The Lord is my light and my salvation... Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage..."

What might God be doing with me or others through this time is a question that perhaps cannot yet be fully answered. But in part, perhaps by sharing my experience of letting my faith inform the present circumstances through the lens of gratitude and a peace which passes understanding, that others may see that God has not abandoned us to this virus but is walking with us through it even in this moment of quarantine. That our hearts should take courage and be anxious for nothing because God's peace will be in us ... and for that I am grateful.



**Sarah Gielink**  
St. Martin's, Chagrin Falls

After the news, I woke up crying for days. Losing the last part of my senior year left me completely heartbroken. My amazing mom helped me plan two days to go back to campus. One, to see friends who were still there (strict social distancing was not in place yet and restaurants and coffee shops were still open), and one for her and my brother to help me move out. On the way down to see my friends, I was nervous. Coming back wouldn't be the same and I knew it. I had left hardly a week prior on a normal rainy Friday after having picked out a prop with my director for my senior capstone performance, done the dishes at the themed house where I lived on campus (shoutout to the House of Linguistic Diversity), and grabbed a quick snack for the road. Now I was coming back to say sudden, rushed, incomplete goodbyes and take in some of my last moments at what had been my home for the last four years.

On that drive to Ohio Wesleyan for visit one, I hit the point where the radio station from home cuts out and had to start flipping around for one without static. Eventually I landed on a Christian station to stick with the rest of the way. As I was off the highway and nearing campus, a song came on that caught my attention. I don't know the title or the artist (maybe if you're reading this, you'll recognize it and can help

me) but it was about how God finds beauty in heartbreak. He loves it when we turn to Him and trust Him in times of trial. Even when we feel our most broken, our most ugly, our most lost, God finds the love in our situation. God is the love. I can't say that I felt 100% confident that entire day, but I know that God was with me and carried me through. I still felt anxious, I still cried, but He was there when I needed Him.

Visit two was move out, and somehow felt different. Less of a shock that everything was suddenly over, feeling more like I had unhappily accepted the whole situation. During these days of emptiness before remote classes started, I decided on three goals to keep myself in a good place—something active, something creative, and something academic every day. And of course, journaling. Journaling has been great for not only my mental health, but for my faith as well. I end up praying through writing sometimes. In my current journal, I have added a gratitude section at the end of each entry—something to thank God for and remind myself to open my eyes to His work in my life. Even on the absolute worst days, there is always something I find I am thankful for.

Now, as what should have been graduation approaches, I find myself heartbroken all over again. All I can do is lean into my faith and pray for others who are suffering. Trust in God has carried me through my worst times before; it will again.

**Jonathan Tazewell**  
Harcourt Parish, Gambier



I feel confident that God has but one goal and one purpose for us. Love. It is, therefore, fitting that this crisis should happen in our Easter season, the season of remembrance of God's greatest act of love for the world in the sacrifice of His only begotten son, Jesus Christ.

Humanity is often complacent and self-serving in our belief in God's love for us and what that means. This is clearly evident in the problematic rise of the prosperity theology that mistakenly advances the notion that God favors the faithful

with worldly riches and good health. The Gospel of Christ tells us repeatedly that God's love is unconditional but that God's expectation of us is sacrifice and service to others. The novel coronavirus pandemic has demanded sacrifices large and small. Grief, loss, and death. Financial pain and physical suffering. Spiritually, one of my greatest losses is giving up the joy of sharing in the body and blood of Christ Jesus through the Eucharist. This loss reminds me to meditate on what life might be like if Christ had not let himself be crucified upon the cross. Who would we be without joining in communion in the body of Christ? It is sharing in the sacrifice that makes us Christians, and God's grace upon us is not prosperity but our privilege to share in God's great loss.

We find ourselves thankful for those closest to us and reaching out electronically to those friends and family we have taken for granted. This crisis has shined a light on the valiant heroism of those exemplifying Christ's love, those unglorified everyday neighbors who, through love, give themselves in sacrifice to keep us alive and well.

And yet, this lesson also reveals the wickedness and evil in the world. Evil in the sins of selfishness, avarice, and greed. We see neighbors whose demand for their own needs shout self-righteously above the needs of humanity. I worry also that in coming through this crisis, we will forget the long term lesson we have been given. People will claim that we are great, and we came together in this crisis to help one another, but they will forget or ignore the systemic problems of poverty and access to healthcare, food, and employment that disproportionately affect African Americans, Latinx, Native People in our country, the poor, the incarcerated, the homeless, and disabled.

We will return to a new normal and perhaps forget the lessons of the past and the teaching of our prophets. There was, after all, a coronavirus brought before by those who came across the ocean to the Americas, and it nearly wiped out the people who had lived here for centuries.

God is asking us to love, but true love comes only through our willingness to sacrifice for everyone around us.



**Meghan Jenkins**  
St. Barnabas, Bay Village

At the beginning of our current COVID-19 reality, I found myself being optimistic and content with a break from the hustle-and-bustle of the real world. I pictured it like a three-week break; working from home, sipping coffee in my newly-decorated office, no commuting, staying in PJs while the kids played downstairs, and my husband making daily brunch. In fact, that sounds like my favorite parts of vacation. Who needs all the stress and anxiety of everyday life? All you need is love, right?

Well, as the three-week break in March has trickled into May (with no definite end in sight), I find myself relating more closely with the words of wisdom of famed Peanuts author and illustrator, Charles M. Schultz, “All you need is love. But a little chocolate now and then doesn’t hurt.”

Our “break from the real world” has become simply “the real world.” I find that I have replaced one stressor with a new one. No work commute, but not all the work resources I need. No morning rush to get the kids on the bus, but now I’m helping them log on to Google classroom and Zoom calls throughout the day.

I find myself longing for the structure my old routine provided. Even my church routine has shifted into something I never pictured. Instead of going each Sunday to see familiar

faces, sing hymns with my family, share Eucharist, and socialize at coffee hour, I am logging onto Facebook live for worship each Sunday and sharing Zoom calls to catch up with other parishioners.

With all the reallocation of stressors, Mr. Schultz was definitely right. A little chocolate every now and then does indeed help. Here’s a short list of the bits of sweetness I have come to appreciate during the pandemic:

**More family meal time** – Before the stay at home order, we had definitely gotten into a rut that included a little too much takeout and eating on the run to accommodate our busy schedule. Now that we are all at home, family meal time has become more of

a welcome part of our regular routine. We decide together what to make, and the kids have begun to show an interest in cooking. We make a big deal to set the table properly and share something about our day. I have noticed that even though we are all under the same roof, quality time is still at a premium between my working, the kids’ schooling, and my husband’s busyness with his responsibilities. Family meal time has provided us the opportunity to slow down and enjoy each other’s company.

**Compline** – I remember going through this Evening Prayer during Confirmation class, but admittedly rarely used it in my daily life. However, our priest has begun leading compline on Facebook Live several nights a week and it is such a relaxing and calming way to end the day. My daughter even likes to join in as part of her bedtime routine.

**Zoom calls with other moms** - I’ll admit, this was weird at first. But I have actually come to enjoy late-night Zoom calls with my dear friends to catch up on what’s happening in their crazy houses right now. While it’s certainly different than meeting up at a restaurant over dinner and drinks, there’s no need for a babysitter and it’s definitely cheaper!

While I certainly don’t pretend to hold all the answers, I have come to realize that embracing some small nuggets of the new normal just might be the “chocolate” I need to take with me once things return to the way they were.



**Tyler Hennigan**  
St. Paul's, Medina

I am 13 years old and am in 7th grade. I am an active member of the youth group and an acolyte. The COVID-19 pandemic has changed my life in a lot of ways. Social isolation during the pandemic means I cannot do many of the things I love to do, like hanging out with my friends. This also affects my physical activities because all spring sports have been canceled or postponed, so I cannot play lacrosse.

It has also changed the way I learn. A favorite part of my school day was socializing with my friends, but this has been taken away from me. Now it is very hard to stay on task when sitting in a room by yourself staring at a computer and learning through videos and articles the teachers give us, along with worksheets for participation points, whether we understand it or not.

My home life has changed somewhat as well. We have family meals together daily and I have had more time for family game nights and playing with my siblings.

Throughout quarantine, I have been wondering why is this happening now and why have we been so unprepared for this? We should have been prepared for this, but this can

also teach us that something unexpected can always happen. Sometimes we do not know what God has planned for us, or sometimes we don't always like the plan God has.

Through all these changes, my church has been part of my life in many ways. Although we cannot physically be in church, we still have a church worship service every Sunday morning through Zoom. We also have youth group meetings weekly on Zoom, and although it's different and I'd rather be able to meet in person, it helps to connect to my youth group friends and still feels like a place where I feel safe and can talk to people I really trust. We can share our thoughts, learn our Bible lesson, and have fun and socialize a bit together.

One thing that has not changed through all this is that we are still able to pray, regardless of who we are with or where we are located. I hope after this social isolation and the COVID-19 pandemic is over that we have learned to be more prepared for unexpected things in the future. I hope that people continue to trust that God knows the plan, even when we may not, and I hope that people are able to remember the importance of prayer and kindness and compassion to help heal others throughout the world.

Brant Lee  
Trinity Cathedral

My front garden perennials are coming up nicely. My mostly-grown children are home and healthy and happy. Marie has been able to get out for a walk or a bike ride almost every day. My semester wrapped up smoothly. We are fine. We are FINE.

But people are losing their jobs. Their children have no school and no childcare. The rent is due, and the bills are due, and although the water is not yet being shut off and the eviction orders are all stayed, those bills are piling up. The demand at food banks is through the roof. Dozens of organizations in my community have started providing emergency food: drop-offs and deliveries, and long pickup lines in parking lots. And still there is more need.

And, of course, people are getting fevers, people are having trouble catching their breath, people are being rushed into intensive care and put on ventilators. People are dying.

It feels like a time during which the prophets might have issued warnings for us to heed. And there are plenty of would-be prophets issuing warnings. The plague is a judgment! Heed the guidance of the public health experts! Beware government tyranny! Don't trust the cops! Don't trust what you read on social media! Don't trust the President! Don't trust the news. Don't trust ANYONE.

It's sneaky, this virus. It spreads stealthily, when you do not feel sick. Many—most, really—who get it don't suffer that much, don't go to the hospital, don't die. Things don't look different, except in particular cities and far-away countries. If you're inclined to trust authorities, there is plenty of evidence that it's urgent to follow their guidelines. If you're not so inclined, your own senses might tell you that the danger is exaggerated. Your perennials look fine. The virus is almost perfectly designed to exploit fear, doubt, and distrust. In the end, you have to decide where to put your faith.

The thing is, like medical despair, social despair—injustice and inequality—has always looked like this. The economic stress and the needs that cannot be satisfied. These are sneaky, too. They seem to happen in particular cities and far-away countries. The systemic racial inequality that no longer looks like a police officer with dogs and a water hose. The quiet desperation of families and fallen-apart families in an



economic system where one unexpected bill turns carefully balanced risk into a dark hole. You can't tell just by looking—people look like they don't have the symptoms of despair. Their social media page looks fine. We are FINE. What has happened now is that every family got that unexpected bill at the same time. But many don't see the urgency.

Why didn't we see? Even before the pandemic, 10% of the public school students in Akron, where I live, were homeless. The numbers have been ugly for decades: people with no health care, people with not enough hope of escaping the criminal justice system, people approaching old age with zero savings, people with housing insecurity... But if you were not inclined to notice these realities, You might only see that we are FINE.

I think the pandemic has brought the world into clearer focus. My faith requires me to see the world with open eyes. To me, social justice advocacy is Christ's ministry for those who see.



**Marilyn Lewis**  
St. Paul's, Norwalk

My husband and I live in a senior retirement facility. However, due to my husband's failing health, we no longer live together. I am in our apartment, and he is in the healthcare unit here. I have been his caregiver and advocate for many years. I would visit with him every day and ensure his needs were

appropriately met and to be sure he smiled and laughed.

Then COVID-19 entered our lives. Everything changed here at the facility. Everyone is now 'locked down' in our apartments. I cannot go and see my husband, I cannot leave the facility, and all of my meals are brought to me. There is no interaction with anyone in person.

Since I retired 12 years ago, my mission has been caring for my husband. I now feel useless, lost, and very alone. I pray several times a day asking God, what am I supposed to do now? I have no purpose. I miss my friends at dinner, our conversations, my silly playing of my kazoo when anyone

had a birthday. Those much older than I would request that I to play a song for them and we would laugh and enjoy each other's company. Then it hit me. God has answered my prayer. I can spread joy, laughter, and peace with the residents here just by giving them a phone call and playing my silly kazoo. It makes us smile and take our minds off of our current circumstances. I have a new mission that helps me feel a little less lonely and a little more connected.

I have missed my church family at St. Paul's for a number of years. Each week, I received the printed items for the following Sunday. However, it is not the same reading alone as it had been sharing with the congregation. Then, shortly before Palm Sunday, Zoom had taken care of that. I attended and participated in every service during Holy Week. It was as if my eyes and heart had been opened anew to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Each day I felt my faith growing stronger. We now worship on Sunday via the internet and I can see and talk to everyone. I know that because of all of my prayers, my Sunday worship, and my listening to the word of the Lord, I will get through this with a lifted spirit and realization that there is always another mission for me going forward.

**Marc and Julie Haywood**  
Church of the Redeemer, Lorain

We think this time of quarantine is reminding us to put our trust in God because God is watching our backs, especially since it's hard to know which source of information is telling the truth. It has also been a reminder to take better care of the Earth. With all this understandable anxiety and fear, we think that God is still making sure the message of love is heard.

The spiritual insights that stick with us most are the importance of listening to God's calling, doing inner work, speaking honestly, having a good church, and turning to people who are still being examples of love and kindness. We also have been listening to a lot of Eminem and Prince to get by, especially "Dove's Cry" and "Sometimes It Snows In April," which, sadly, is too accurate.

We really miss interactions with our elders, especially the hugs. We didn't realize how much it would hurt to not be able to hug somebody you consider to be your mom.

We listen to the Sunday church audio recordings. Church is our family, a safe space, and we both feel welcomed at Redeemer. This time has certainly been instilling patience in us because we can't do as much of what we were used to doing or see the people we love from church. We both agree that this is harder for Marc.

Our work at Postmates hasn't been smooth sailing either. People are not as compassionate or forgiving as we would hope. We sometimes feel angry because people seem to have forgotten about basic human decency. People have been disrespectful during work. The question is, "where do we draw the line between pandemic and paranoia?" We worry that some of the distancing and anxiety will remain. We have had a number of experiences where we have had to speak up for ourselves and we hope to continue finding our voices.

In working together, we have found a sense of purpose and have had a chance to work on our communication. As we look to the future, we hope to continue getting to know each other better and connecting more. Now we are just waiting for those church mom hugs.





**Megan Allen**  
Seminararian

For many of us, I imagine living in quarantine feels like a pendulum swinging between the past and the future – between remembrance and hopefulness. But what do we do with the vast space between what we cling to and what we desire? This image of a swinging pendulum has stuck with me during our time of quarantine, and I have come to understand this space as an opportunity to move within the liminal life we are called to as followers of Jesus.

Liminality is the space between the known and unknown, an awareness of the porous nature of knowability. People also use the word wilderness to describe similar seasons of great discernment and ambiguity. However, the wilderness metaphor offers a beginning and end. Scripture tells us that Jesus and others both entered and exited the wilderness, but Jesus never abandoned his liminality. Mortal and immortal, king and servant, human and divine – Jesus embodies liminality. Living a liminal life means being fully present to the ever changing, yet always grounded now.

Quarantine liminality challenges me to engage a deeper experience of discipleship, one rooted in improvisation, rather than predictability. Both the art of improvisation and our theology teach that each moment holds an opportunity for transformation. This requires letting go of all that we know and expect, so that we can experience what is possible. In our Baptism, we are grafted into the liminal body of Christ, where grace and love manifest the limitless possibilities of God. In this time of unpredictability, we are being invited daily to improvise, to participate in the wonders God has for us – wonders that persist throughout wilderness wanderings!

Eventually, we will exit the wilderness of COVID-19. Do we hope merely to return to our past lives transplanted into the future – swinging past what this moment has to teach us? I hope not! This wildly unexpected and troublesome season nurtures the gift of liminal living. We can learn that both clinging to the past and focusing on the future prevent us from experiencing God's restorative presence in the now. In this in-between space, we can experience God's limitless creative power working within what is to bring about what can be. Our call to follow Jesus includes our call to live liminally, not only in the wilderness seasons but throughout our lives of discipleship.

# Youth Compline Via Zoom

by the Rev. Anna Sutterisch

The Happening Retreat Youth Leadership team gathered via Zoom from the safety of our homes on a Friday night in March—the same Friday night we had planned to host their peers from across the diocese for a retreat led by this amazing team of youth. They had spent months preparing for this, and now we were at home. That ended up being the first of five youth events scheduled for the spring and summer that had to be postponed due to the global pandemic. And as we gathered with grief, uncertainty, and fear, we realized we were going to need each other. We decided on a weekly Zoom gathering, open to youth across the Diocese of Ohio, to check in, pray, laugh, and share. That's how Sunday Night Student Compline was born. Vivianne Clark from St. James, Painesville, a leader of the cancelled Happening Retreat, said, "Sunday night compline has been really spiritually healing for me because it shows us that even when we are physically separated, our connection to God keeps us spiritually together."

That's the point, to be together. Every Sunday night at 8:00 p.m., students (from grade 6 through college) gather on Zoom to pray compline together. We check in, usually through a silly get-to-know-you question, ask for a volunteer to lead the prayer, and reflect on the Gospel in breakout rooms grouped by age. Many weeks, a youth participant will pre-select a song we share via Youtube as a moment of reflection during the compline service.

Things get serious. Things get silly. We meet each other's pets, see each other's houses, complain about boredom, lament cancelled proms and sport seasons, talk about how our families are annoying us, how TikTok is a source of joy and entertainment for hours, and how much homework teachers are giving out.

Erin Knapp of St. James, Painesville said, "Compline allows me to have a time to reflect and get away from all the anxieties of our current situation. It also allows me to connect with other youth from various parts of the Diocese and allows us all to come together, not only to check in, but to worship together." This gathering impacts lives in real ways, too.

Kennedy Naupauer of St. Matthew's, Brecksville, said, "I look forward to these Sunday night meetings. It's a peaceful time for me to pray with others. It has also inspired me to reconnect with a friend I was in a fight with. Since I cannot go to church, I'm glad I can connect with others reminding me I'm not alone in this time."

No matter how we're feeling that day, what the news looks like, or how we are doing staying at home, we know that when Sunday nights come around, God will be praised by the youth of our diocese. Emily Ribovich of Good Shepherd, Lyndhurst summed it up by saying, "Compline gives me an opportunity to reflect on the week and give 100% of my attention to the Lord, while still having fun with my peers from around the Diocese."

# Keeping the Faith – A Ohio's Response to the

by the Rev. Dr. Brian K. Wilbert

In a Facebook post to "Episcopal Friends and Church Historians," the Rev. Byron Rushing, Vice President of the House of Deputies and historian asked, "Does your parish or your diocese have a pandemic or epidemic story in its history? Find them. Post them. Put them on your webpage. Preach about them. If your church was around in 1918... you have one."

I thought I would only need to search the pages of *Church Life* to research how churches in our diocese responded to the 1918 Spanish Flu Epidemic but alas, for financial reasons *Church Life* ceased publication in June 1917 and didn't resume regular publication until October 1920. I turned to other print sources including Bishop Leonard's journal from 1918, the 1918 *Churchman* journal, the 1919 Diocesan Convention Journal, and the 1919 Diocesan Women's Auxiliary Yearbook.

Mark Duffy, Canonical Archivist of The Episcopal Church, provided an abstract from material which will soon be published on [episcopalarchives.org](http://episcopalarchives.org):

"The severe impact of the 1918 influenza was little recognized in formal commentary but widely felt across the church. It undoubtedly played a part in the unusual but unexplored decline in members across 47 of 72 domestic dioceses. The 1919 Church Annual observed in its lead editorial a remarkable loss in the church's numbers, income, and evangelism work, which were 'much less than normal...for the first time at least in our generation.' Discussion of the condition and concerns of the Church at this time was, however, narrowly focused on the national war effort."

This was true in our diocese. In early October 1918, the War Commission took over the campus of Kenyon College for use as a training base. Bishop Leonard was in Gambier lecturing Bexley Hall seminarians when he wrote in his journal on October 9, "The so-called Spanish influenza is here—with about 16 college men sick—it is like the original la grippe of 30 years ago."

Kenyon President William Foster Pierce, reporting to the 1919 Diocesan Convention, gave the

# Brief Look at the Church in 1918 Influenza Pandemic



following account: “A very few days after the War Department had assumed control on October first the epidemic of influenza broke out. More than sixty cases developed in the Unit, of which two proved fatal.”

In his Sunday, October 13 journal entry, Bishop Leonard wrote: “By order of government, because of prevalence of influenza everywhere, all churches and public places are closed...” On Sunday, October 20, he wrote: “It is unpleasant and very unnatural to be quarantined from church on the Lord’s day—Let us hope and pray that the epidemic will have abated so as to allow the authorities to lift the embargo.”

By Sunday, November 10, the day before Armistice Day, the ban on public worship was lifted.

On Monday, November 11, news of the end of World War I overshadowed the influenza epidemic. Bishop Leonard recorded “Some said that this is the greatest day in the world’s history except for the first Christmas because the great world war came to an end...Rejoicing rages in Berlin and elsewhere...Cleveland is wild with excitement, everyone shouting with gladness. Thanks be to God for his great goodness in causing this hideous war to cease...”

			83	7.00	Bk. & Str. 460			
20 S. after Δ	Oct. 9	"	32	9.00	H.C.	51	13	"
	Oct. 13	No Services because of Epidemic of Spanish Influenza.						
	Oct. 15		33	1.30	Marriage			"
	Oct. 16		34	2.70	Burial			"
21 S. after Δ	Oct. 20	No Services because of Epidemic.						
22 S. after Δ	Oct. 27	No Services because of Epidemic.						
23 S. after Δ	Nov. 3	No Services because of Epidemic.						
24 S. after Δ	Nov. 10	St. Timothy's	84	7.30	H.C.	50	52	18
"	"	"	85	9.00	Church School	55		"
"	"	"	86	10.30	In P. Litany	91		"
"	"	"	87	7.00	E.P.	78		"

In other influenza-related news, the *Churchman* journal, during the last quarter of 1918, reported on: church closings nationwide (as well as opposition to that decision); chaplains and nurses ministering to ill soldiers at home and abroad; and the use of intinction versus the common cup in the Eucharist post-epidemic.

The Secretary to the Woman’s Auxiliary in Ohio reported, “during the year, Red Cross Work as well as the epidemic of Influenza, interfered quite seriously with all Auxiliary work.” The report of the Auxiliary Daughters and Juniors chronicled “the after effects of the epidemic entailing longer hours at school including Saturday even, in some cases being no longer a holiday, brought consternation to the heart of many a Chapter Director...”

In his report to Diocesan Convention concerning the work of the Rev. Brewster Allabaugh, missionary for the Deaf-Mute community in Ohio, Archdeacon Asa Abbot writes, “with the exception of the period covered by the Spanish influenza, which has seriously crippled our work for some time, the work has been carried on uninterrupted in spite of the severe war

conditions. To our knowledge only two of three hundred and seventy-one members have died as a result of the epidemic.”

Still, there was much to celebrate once the initial danger was past and, while more stories can be told, I’ll end with the pastoral directive which Bishop Leonard issued in a postcard sent to all clergy and parishes on November 14, 1918: “It is eminently fitting that in all our churches on Sunday next there should be offered special Thanksgiving prayers and solemn Te Deums for the wonderful victories vouchsafed us by the Lord of Hosts...I would suggest the special Thanksgivings in the Prayer Book for victory, and for the cessation of pestilence; the same also to be used on Thanksgiving Day in every church in Ohio. Faithfully yours, W.A.L.”

May we all be able to sing a Te Deum soon and very soon. In the meantime, how grateful we are to Bishop Mark Hollingsworth whose vision for this edition of *Church Life* will chronicle our faithful response in this time of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Episcopal Diocese of Ohio  
2230 Euclid Avenue  
Cleveland, Ohio 44115-2499

# Save the Date

204th Annual  
Diocesan Convention  
November 13 & 14

Details will be forthcoming at [dohio.org](http://dohio.org).