A PRAYER FOR MISSION STRATEGY

Almighty and Eternal God, we come to You as Your Holy People.
We seek to actively and creatively be involved in the transforming power of Your Spirit in the world.
Open our eyes, Lord Christ, to see the movement of Your Spirit.
Open our minds, Lord Christ, to imagine and re-imagine new ways of being church here and in our diocese.
Open our ears, Lord Christ, to hear the voices of all Your Holy People, from the faintest to the most boisterous.
Open our mouths, Lord Christ, to share and speak with all truth and honesty in Your Love.
Open our hands, Lord Christ, to share all that we have because we have been given it in love by You.
Open our hearts, Lord Christ, to trust You to provide for us and help us receive all we need for our work from You.
We give thanks to You, O Lord, for calling us to be your disciples and to share the message of Your Gospel with all the world.
Grant us, Lord Christ, the courage and determination to follow You wherever You may lead us and ask us to go.
We ask these through and in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord.
Amen.

Fr. Mike Newago, O.S.F.
St. Barnabas’ Episcopal Church Mission Strategy Developer, Diocese of Springfield

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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 send 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!
+ Rt. Rev. Daniel H. Martins, Bishop

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FROM THE BISHOP

“Now that our Lenten observance is ended ...” So proclaims the celebrant when inviting the community to the renewal of baptismal vows at the Easter Vigil (when there are no actual baptisms). This is a bookend to the invitation “to the observance of a holy Lent” on Ash Wednesday, when the celebrant bids the congregation to faithfulness in “prayers, fasting, and self-denial.” Now that our Lenten observance is ended, the invitation shifts to festivity and thanksgiving, for “Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast.” (The Spanish translation strikes me as more pointed here: Celebremos la fiesta! This does not mean we abandon the practices of prayer and almsgiving--though we can certainly lay fasting aside for the next seven weeks--it’s more about the attitude we bring to such things.

Have you thought about what a treasure the liturgical year is? Over the course of the annual cycle that begins every Advent, it exposes us to a rich and balanced diet of theological truth. It walks us through the hard news, the warnings, the comforting news, the inspiring news, the soberly truthful news, the joyful news, the transcendent news, the energizing news--all adding up to the good news we call gospel. And it does all this without asking our permission, or even bothering to inquire how we’re feeling!

Perhaps, during Lent, you didn’t really feel like being penitential and restrained. Maybe things were going great for you in your life, and you were in a party mood. Or, perhaps, now that “mandatory rejoicing” is upon us, you’re just not in the mood. You feel overwhelmed by anxiety and fear, and would rather just keep things very quiet. The liturgical year’s response to either of these situations is sublime apathy. It’s now all about you! (or me, or any of us) My mood is irrelevant. God’s mood, expressed through the repeated pattern of fast, feast, and ordinary time, is what matters. Worship is not about us sharing our moods with God; it’s about God sharing his moods with us.

I hope the way I have expressed this doesn’t sound uncaring or unfeeling. I hope I’m pointing to a quite wonderful bit of God’s mercy. Christ is risen from the dead, and that’s a complete game-changer. Yes, jobs were lost today, but Christ is risen from the dead. Yes, terminal illness was diagnosed today, but Christ is risen from the dead. Yes, hearts were broken today, but Christ is risen from the dead. Yes, we live with the consequences of environmental degradation, but Christ is risen from the dead. However it is that the power of sin and death affects us today, Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and upon those in the tomb bestowing life. That doesn’t make all the bad stuff unreal, but it does put it in a perspective that cannot help but evoke rejoicing on the part of those who are destined to share in that triumph.

So ... keep your party hat on. Feasting is compulsory!
How the fire started and how they first heard about it:
The sexton had come by the church for something; he called the parish administrator at home, who called me. Since Emmanuel sits in the middle of downtown Champaign and our fire closed three main roads during rush hour, the news spread very rapidly -- I was getting texts and Facebook messages every minute or so. I ditched my car about a block away and said “I’m the pastor!” to the policeman who tried to stop me from entering the perimeter, and when I saw the look that came over his face I knew this was bad. That evening, all we knew was that there were flames engulfing the roof of the rectory space (which is mostly used for storage these days.) We didn’t find out until some days later that the cause was a short in an electrical junction box in the attic.

Damage from the fire:
The rectory attic was damaged significantly by the fire. The roof burned through in two places and was structurally compromised (slate is heavy!). There was of course smoke damage throughout the whole property that had to be re-mediated as well (and ServPro did a great job.) Most of the post-fire effect on the rectory, though, was from the huge amount of water poured through it as the firefighters were heroically facing the flames and saving the rest of our property (which, as they emphasized, could easily have been a total loss). Lots of soaked plaster had to come out, for example.

Help from the community:
One of the things we know about God is that he uses tragic events like this for good, and this was no exception. Before the fire was even out we had two offers of places for us to hold services if needed, and nearly every priest in my deanery was in touch to ask what help their church could give us. We received cards and notes from other congregations, and people sent unsolicited donations in. A local business we connect with through our involvement in the Champaign Center Partnership even phoned to offer me a free apartment if I needed it!

Emmanuel had a discernment process underway about use of the rectory; how the fire came into play with that:
About 10 parishioners and I spent most of 2017 seeking God’s guidance on how he might be calling us to use the rectory space for mission. We prayer walked, interviewed, researched, studied Scripture, and prayed a lot. The group had concluded its work and presented a vision to the Mission Leadership Team for the rectory to become flexible space that can serve, as they called it, both as a “front porch” and a “living room” available to the community, other non-profits, neighbors, and our own parishioners. We weren’t 100% sure
where the money was going to come from, and a lot of the interior spaces that would have needed work anyway now have fresh damage that is covered by insurance. The costs will be much higher, of course, and we have a whole new group charged with figuring out practicalities. But in the end, we believe there’s a blessing in this because it gives us easy access to do things like systems work, putting in insulation, and making the first floor ADA compliant.

Inside Emmanuel days after the fire:
One of the things I am proudest of is the way ministry continued on completely undaunted. The next morning, when we were without heat and without power, our lay sack lunch volunteer just showed up as if, well, of course we were still going to be ministering to the homeless. We had weekday Mass as usual later that day, and I had such a sense at the altar of all of us standing before Jesus in glorious defiance of what evil had tried to do to us. We had a major funeral for a beloved lifelong parishioner three days away, and a 1662 Evensong with a guest ensemble from Chicago four days away, and it all happened exactly as planned. The staff were amazing, and parishioner after parishioner stepped up in ministry in all kinds of ways. I was interested how many comments we got about how, in the media, comments coming from the parish consistently pointed to our mission and our trust in God. Events like this are Gospel opportunities, and we really witnessed that.

Visit from the firefighters:
Fire Chief Gary Ludwig came in to talk with me because in the paper and on TV I’d said thank you to the firefighters so many times. As we got to know each other, he and I discovered we are both people who believe very deeply in the importance of gratitude as a stance towards life. We put our heads together and decided the crew that was on duty should come to Mass one Sunday so Emmanuel could express our thanks and pray for them. It was a deeply moving time for everyone there. Plus our kids got to wear fire hats and climb on the trucks!

EXPERIENCE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

Joyce C. Wright, Kay Mulhall, Lorraine Crummey, Ann Prisland

During Fall 2016 a group of women from The Chapel of St. John The Divine, Champaign came together to form Experience Christian Community (ECC). ECC engages parishioners in Spiritual development and social justice. Our intention has been influenced by Bishop Doyle’s book A Generous Community, as it conveys our desire to build community within and outside the Church based on Christian beliefs. While ECC is a women’s group, our members, welcome the participation of all in ECC projects based on the good of mutual support in community outreach.

Since March 2017, ECC members have:

Read and discussed A Generous Community: Being the Church in a New Missionary Age by C. Andrew Doyle (Bishop of Texas). Several members participated in the book discussion group hosted by parishioners Bob Delvin and Emily Knox.

Organized a training on the Share the Care Program and worked to support the creation of an STC program at the Chapel.

Partnered with the University Y New Welcome Center designed to help immigrants fully integrate into American society and prepare
receiving communities to be welcoming and inclusive. In collaboration with Champaign-Urbana Solidarity Sundays, our first activity was hosting a dessert fair on the lawn of the Chapel to celebrate the national Y’s Welcoming Week.

Hosted a speaker from the Eastern Illinois Foodbank to learn more about the work of EIF and how the Chapel can best support their effort to alleviate hunger.

Learned about the Books to Prisoners program from parishioner Michelle Lore and identified ideas for individual and group activities to support the work of providing books to Illinois inmates.

Attended the Episcopal Churchwomen (ECW) Springfield and Chicago diocesan retreats.

As St. George’s gets ready to start the Lenten season each year there is one thing they can depend on, pancakes and sausage on Fat Tuesday. Every year our youth host the parishes of St. George’s and St. Mark’s Lutheran for a pancake supper. The youth do all the cooking, serving, and cleanup, so everyone else can just show up, eat, and share fellowship. This year was another success with youth, ranging from middle school to high school, cooking nearly 350 pancakes and 300 sausages, serving around 50 people. We also collected a free-will offering of $163 to support Beacon Ministry in Belleville. Beacon Ministry is churches,
businesses, and volunteers joining together to provide life coaching, mentoring, and financial assistance, connections with helping resources, a hot meal and spiritual support group for the homeless, and furniture for those who need it but cannot afford to buy it.

St. Michael’s Youth Conference

June 10-16, 2018
St. Michael’s Episcopal Church, O’Fallon

St. Michael’s Conference is not to be confused with Summer Camp and is not a replacement for a camp experience. St. Michael’s is designed for those who would like to go deeper in their faith after experiencing a camp or a renewal weekend. (Though participation in camps or renewal events are not prerequisites!).

Each “Michaelite” participates in four conferences during the week. These conferences are designed to engage the participant in strengthening their faith and forming them as vital disciples of Jesus.

Of course, the week would not be complete without caring for whole person. To this end there are daily Eucharist and prayer, physical activities, group games, excellent and large quantities of food, and special events each day. St. Michael’s Conferences are best experienced rather than described, and we hope that you will join us! If you do, you will want to come back for more.

PS: Our dear Bishop has stated that attendance at St. Michael’s will count as confirmation class!

Space is limited, so early registration is highly encouraged! See http://www.episcopalspringfield.org/youth/smyc/ for registration forms and other important documents.

Cursillo

Cursillo is an opportunity to grow in our Christian faith. Its goal is to equip Christians to lead a Christ-centered life and help spread the good news. This lay person-led weekend includes talks, quiet reflection, song, group activities, worship, fun and fellowship! Additionally, there will be opportunities for spiritual counseling with clergy. Cursillo is a time for learning and rejoicing and going out to reflect to others that joy to encourage them in the way, and we hope to see you there!

For more information about Cursillo in the Episcopal Church, visit: http://www.nationalepiscopalcursillo.org/

Next Cursillo Weekend: June 21-24, 2018 at Toddhall Retreat Center, Columbia IL

Theme: This is the day that the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Start planning and praying now — is this the year for you to make your Cursillo weekend? Or, for those that have already made the weekend, who will you invite?

See http://www.episcopalspringfield.org/cursillo/ for the brochure, application and team application.

The Diocesan Endowment Fund is invested in a managed portfolio. The value of the Endowment Fund increased from $2,460,509 at the beginning of 2017 to a value of $2,710,222 on December 31, 2017. The investments gained $383,726 for 2017. There were withdrawals of $115,122 during the year.

Most of the Combined Fund is also invested in a managed portfolio, but a portion of the Combined Fund is also invested in a short-term mutual fund. The Combined Fund increased in value from $3,165,523 at the beginning of 2017 to a value of $3,651,127 on December 31, 2017. The investments gained $434,989 for the year. There were $144,432 in withdrawals in 2017 and $215,550 in additions during that time. The portion of the Combined Fund invested in short-term mutual funds increased in value from $530,237 to $616,915 at the beginning of 2017 to $616,915 on December 31, 2017. The Diocesan Treasurer uses the short-term mutual fund as a place to invest money on a short term basis, and that amount will vary from time-to-time during the year depending on cash flows as revenues are received and expenses incurred.

The year 2017 saw, on average, increases in value for equities in the financial markets. This is widely attributed to the anticipated and then enacted changes in tax and other policies from Congress and the new administration. January 2018 saw continued increases in values of equities. However, as this report is being written in early February 2018, equity values have been volatile. The current investment strategy being followed by the Trustees tends to under-perform the market in times of rapid increases but performs better than the market in times of decreases. This is a conservative strategy intended to grow the invested funds in the long-term while lessening losses at times of market declines.

Donald Monty
Chairman, Trustees of the Diocese of Springfield.

EPISCOPAL CHURCH WOMEN

All women of the Diocese of Springfield are invited to the Diocesan Episcopal Church Women’s Annual Meeting on Saturday, April 28, 2018 at Toddhall Retreat and Conference Center from 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. in the Barn (across from Wilson Hall).

Mrs. Barbara Kay will portray Katie Luther, Martin Luther’s wife. Lent Madness participants will know her as Saint Katharina von Bora (she is in the Saintly Sixteen).

We will have a business session, election for Diocesan Episcopal Church Women’s President, and the United Thank Offering Ingathering.

The Dioceses of Springfield, Indianapolis and Missouri are hosting the 2019 Province V Episcopal Church Women’s Annual Meeting in Springfield, IL. We will be discussing ideas for this meeting.

We will have lunch at Toddhall, the cost is $15.00. Reservations for the meeting must be made by April 16th to Jan Goossens, utospil@sbcglobal.net. Please let her know of any dietary restrictions. Please bring payment with you.

You can stay on Friday night or Saturday night at Toddhall. You need to make your own arrangements with Toddhall’s staff by calling (618) 281-8180 or toddhall@htc.net.

UTO SPRING INGATHERING

Spring is here so that means it is time for the semiannual United Thank Offering Ingathering. Parishes will be receiving more information on the Ingathering by the end of March. The Spring Ingathering is the Sunday following Ascension, however parishes can set their own dates if they wish too.

Please contact Joyce Wright, UTO Coordinator if you have questions or need blue boxes etc., jcwright117@gmail.com

Thanks for your participation in this great ministry of the Episcopal Church.

Joyce C. Wright
UTO Coordinator
Diocese of Springfield
carry a very large cross, fortunately with wheels on one of the ends.

We are preparing for our Celebration of the 175th Anniversary of the consecration of the historic church building in which we worship.

The Rev. Bill Howard

ST. JOHN'S
Centralia, Illinois

St. John's Episcopal Church continues its negotiations with Redeemer Lutheran Church to build a relationship in which the two congregations can worship and hold fellowship with each other in the same church building. The congregation of Redeemer has an interim pastor whose contract expires at the end of June 2018, so we are finding this deadline to be fast approaching.

In November the congregation of St. John's gave thanks for the good medical news which was received by both Katie McCrary and Tom Walsh. Prayers for their total recovery continue.

On December 3rd, the Bishop made his annual visit to St. John's. After the Parish Dinner the Bishop answered questions centered around matters of church policy and theology relating to Episcopal worship and Lutheran worship including how they are alike and where they are different. Members from Redeemer Lutheran joined in to learn more about what services combining Lutheran and Episcopal traditions can include. On Christmas Eve St. John's hosted the first joint service with Redeemer Lutheran at St. John's. It included hymns and prayers from the Lutheran tradition, and was a wonderful start to our shared ministry.

In January St. John's held its annual meeting which was ably conducted by our Senior Warden, Erin McCrary. Three new members were elected to the Mission Leadership Team with terms ending in January 2021: Judy Holmes, Tom Walsh, and Rod White. Erin McCrary and Ralph Dooley will complete their terms in January 2019, and Karen Walsh and Chuck Lewis will complete their terms in January 2020.

Erin McCrary, Sr. Warden and The Rev. Sylvia Howard

TRINITY
Mt. Vernon, Illinois

In November, we hosted a perennial favorite among many in the community, the annual chili luncheon fundraiser. This year saw several hundred come through our doors to eat in or carry out chili, Italian beef, sweets and more. It was a resounding success (but we’re glad it only comes once a year)!

Advent saw us engage in our 3rd annual ecumenical Lessons and Carols based on the popular service at King’s College. Five churches were represented, and the offering went to support the community’s homeless shelter. We capped the night off with coffee and desserts.

Sunday School and midweek studies meet regularly with Lenten series
coming of the birth of Christ. They also had a hand this year, in helping to decorate the church. Using paper towel tubes, wrapping paper, and battery operated votive candles, they made some amazing centerpieces for our table decorations. Christmas Eve was a festive occasion, as is common at St. Thomas. Those in attendance were privileged to hear a number of very talented performers, before the service began. This was followed by the Christ mass, which with the decorated church always brings a new feeling of the Holy Spirit to those participating. One of the grandest traditions of the service is the singing of Silent Night. With the lights off, and the church only being lit by candles, the final verse sung acapella is always a moving experience.

January was no less eventful, with Epiphany and the beginning of a new year. In mid-January, St. Thomas held their annual meeting, which is a great time to gather and reflect on the year that was. It is always good to hear reports on the good works performed annually. Thanks was given to those that served in various roles throughout the year, and members stepped up to take on new responsibilities. One unfortunate low light was a burst pipe in our basement that was fortunately caught quickly, minimizing the damage. Like most potential catastrophes at St. Thomas, the congregation rallied to the rescue and within a few days, things were back to normal.

February is off to a good start, with the Sunday school group becoming more active, after a small holiday, with numerous activities to prepare for Ash Wednesday and Lent. As a group we are all preparing for the Lenten season that awaits us, to hopefully provide us all with a time of thought and reflection, before we reach the grand celebration that is the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

David Lever, Sr. Warden

HALE DEANERY

Church of the Redeemer
Cairo, IL

Repair of the roof, painting of the bell tower, repair of the wheelchair ramp and replacement of the back door in parish hall have all be completed by contractor Billy Smith for a total cost of $51,250.00. A generous donation from St. John the Baptist in Mt. Carmel facilitated these repairs.

Martial Arts Outreach resumed after a Christmas break on Tuesday January 2nd. Classes are held in the Parish hall every Tuesday and Thursday from 5-6pm led by Len Harris. The focus of class is to strengthen your mind, body and spirit.

Our Bread Ministry has a strong following and we have combined Rice and Beans ministry with the Bread ministry. The Bread/Rice and Beans are available each Monday of the week in the parish hall.

To help in our outreach efforts and to accommodate growth, our church purchased the building behind the church. It needs a lot of work, but with God’s grace we will have it cleaned and ready to use by this
summer.

Father Bob Towner is holding adult Bible study each Sunday at 9am in the parish hall, with Father James Muriuki teaching the children in the chapel.

Redeemer has six women registered to attend the ECW Lenten Retreat in March. They are all looking forward to this special time to grow closer to each other and to Christ.

Dana Harris

**ST. STEPHEN'S**
**Harrisburg, IL**

“This last quarter we spent $10,000 on two church projects we needed to do. The first was the tuck pointing of the whole church building. This work needed to be done due to the erosion of the seams along the face of the buildings bricks. Our second project was the replacement of all the old light fixtures in the church basement. In October we had our annual visit with our Bishop and he confirmed three of our members during the Sunday service. One of those confirmed was killed in a car crash in November, his confirmation in the light of his death was a was a blessing to us all, to help heal the pain of his passing. I was pleased to see our over all giving this year was up sum 3.5%, thanks be to God. We also had two new outreach projects started this quarter. The first was a project to advertise our church, reward our members and make contact with those outside our church family. We purchased small flash light key chains with the churches name and address on them, each member was told to take two of them one for themselves and one to be given to a stranger with a prayer. The second project was some thing we are going to do for our local food pantry: we have collected over 100 cans of soup to be given out this month. Sickness has hit us hard this quarter: cancer and flu. We are asking God’s healing grace during this time of need.

Father Tim Goodman

**ST. MARKS’**
**West Frankfurt, IL**

“St Mark’s kicked off the program year with Back to Sunday School biscuit.!! The last Sunday of October we encouraged our children to wear their Halloween Costumes to church -- and blessed the costumes and those “inside them.” The kids did an Advent Tree, and sent sets of 12 Nativity cards spread over three different mailings to over 20 shut-ins. And the children did a wonderful program for us on 4 Advent, sharing the Christmas story in verse.

Our adults began having discussions about what we can do to care for our community: how can we feed the hungry around us. We collected non-perishable food through Advent for local distribution. We are making additional plans we can share at a later date. Our adult Study Group finished working through N.T. Wright’s Simply Christian and have selected our next book. Several St Mark’s members attended the Hale Deanery Christmas Gathering at Kokopelli Golf Club-- always fun to join with people from around the deanery for a meal and white elephant gift exchange.

Mother Sherry Black

**ST. ANDREW’S CHURCH**
**Carbondale, IL**

St. Andrew’s achieved its best-ever stewardship season. In keeping with our patron saint, who was the first apostle to be called by Jesus, we honored our “First Stewards,” those long-time members who have made today’s church life possible through years of prayer, work, and giving. We began Advent with the third edition of our Taize liturgy to mark the Feast Day of St. Andrew. This year, we added a short organ concert after the evensong, featuring Dr. James Reifinger. Sue Casebeer and Martha Angel organized wreath-making for use in our Advent devotions at home. We participated in the “Spirit of Christmas,” “Gifts for the Christ Child” and “Socks for Good Sam’s” charity drives. We marked the end of the Twelve Days of Christmas with an Epiphany party at a local restaurant, featuring the reading of T. S. Eliot’s poem, a King’s Cake, and the singing of both “We Three Kings” and “The Twelve Days of Christmas,” complete with visual aids crafted by Matthew Bearden and the rector. We proceeded to celebrate all things Scottish during Robert Burns’ birthday celebration on January 26. Don Monty carried the ceremonial St. Andrew’s virge (alternately known as a mace) to lead off the procession of the haggis, all to the pleasing cadence of a kilted bagpiper. We wrapped up the evening with a game of trivia about Scotland. Meanwhile, the Carbondale Matmakers continue to meet each Tuesday morning, and have completed 67 mats as of this writing, all distributed to the homeless or marginally-housed. St. James has hopped on the mat-making bandwagon, meeting twice per month,
and occasionally hosting matmakers from the homeless shelter in Marion, who enjoy crafting the mats along with the regular members.

Kathryn G. Jeffrey, Rector of St. Andrew’s Parish and Regional Dean

NORTHERN DEANERY

Trinity
Lincoln, IL

Since Synod 2017 Trinity Lincoln has continued to preach and teach the Gospel through word and deed. Father Mark and some parishioners traveled to the First Presbyterian in Lincoln for a night of fellowship and teaching. At the invitation of their pastor, Fr. Mark fielded questions about how the Episcopal Church differs from and is like the Presbyterian Church and gave a flavor of Episcopal worship.

In November, a group traveled to Chicago to celebrate the 100th birthday of a long time parishioner who now lives with her daughter there. Over 100 people attended the celebration and a highlight was a remembrance book compiled by another parishioner that was signed by most of the people at Trinity. Fr. Mark also accompanied a member to visit Nashotah House Seminary. If all goes well, he will be starting classes this fall. Fr. Mark and Sandy attended the city wide Thanksgiving Service hosted by the Lincoln Area Ministerial Association.

December was a month of preparation for Christmas and the Bishop’s Visitation the first Sunday of January. The Bishop confirmed 4 people at the Visitation. The final weekend of January was a baptism which is always glorious even if the young lady was not in favor of having water poured on her head.

We are planning to combine with the Presbyterians again for Ash Wednesday. They are hosting the Shrove Tuesday dinner and then will worship with us on Wednesday with the added bonus of a combined choir.

Fr. Michael Newago will visit later in February to begin the process of Mission Strategy. The regular Bible Study that meets on Thursdays after the Healing Mass is on hiatus for Lent while a member teaches a class on how the Church has viewed the Crucifixion through the ages.

Fr. Mark Evans – Rector

PARISH OF TAZEWELL COUNTY

Do celebrate with the churches of the Parish of Tazewell County—All Saints’ Church in Morton and Saint Paul’s Church in Pekin—a grace-filled 2017 calendar year! Here are the highlights.

Liturgically, in addition to regular Sunday worship, there were seven occasions for an all-Parish Masses, all with robust attendance. Michaelmas in particular was joyful, because rather than a pot-luck, we inaugurated our annual “pie-luck,” with 24 home-made pies both savory and sweet for the reception. Average Sunday attendance increased; four Office services along with Saturday Lady Mass were held weekly; two adult men received the Sacrament of Confirmation; a young girl received the Sacrament of Baptism; a Rosary prayer group began, a new Chalice and Paten were consecrated for All Saints’ Church, and a new purple vestments set debuted at Saint Paul’s Church in Advent.

In terms of Catechesis, three adult groups continued to meet twice-monthly. Each group completed a fascinating book study on the topic of forgiveness, and then began study of the Gospel of Saint Mark by means of a superb commentary. The Lenten study topic was the spirituality of the Eucharist, and this Lent we will study the spirituality of Baptism.

Pastoral and organizational highlights included a new Parish Directory and a Parish-wide movie night in October to see “All Saints - the film,” which was well attended. The hiring of our new Parish Secretary and update our phone and internet system were fruits of partnership between the two churches. Relatedly, All Saints’ Church completed major repairs to the church campus owing to hail damage from the previous year, and Saint Paul’s addressed a number of long-standing repair issues.

Social outreach flourished in both churches. Myriad charitable causes were supported, local ministry organizations were hosted weekly, and new seeds were planted toward a parish-wide hospitality ministry to local retirement communities in 2018. Finally, our Parish Council continued
its twice-yearly deliberations on Mission and Evangelization. The April meeting focused on “replanting” and “endowment as mission.” The October meeting focused on “serving the poor,” and hosted Father Newago from St Barnabas, Havana, who spoke on missions’ strategy. The topics of the upcoming Spring meeting include “lay ministry,” “domestic church,” and “building apostolic evangelism.”

Fr. Matthew Dallman

NORTHWESTERN DEANERY

St. John’s
Decatur, IL

We ended the month of November, 2017 with two funerals. Long time members Stan Metz and David Kidd were placed to rest. Once again in December we gathered toys and other items for the Women’s Prison so that they could send home Christmas gifts when their family visited before Christmas. On December 10th we had our Annual Advent Service of Lessons and Carols with a reception following. On the 14th of December St. John’s hosted two tables at the first annual Red Kettle Gala for the Salvation Army. Considering the extreme weather, our Christmas Eve Masses and Christmas Day were well attended.

On January 13th we had our bi-monthly Cursillo Ultreya in our Parish Hall. Our annual meeting was held on January 21st, following on 9:00 am service. On the 25th we hosted the Ordination of M. Christine Gregory to the Sacred Order of Deacons. A reception followed.

Our weekday Bible Study has finished a tour of the Apocrypha, followed by the book of Genesis and is currently in Exodus. Our Sunday Adult Study has finished a review of the Reformation, Paul’s letter to the Galatians (with Luther’s commentary), and for the current quarter, we are learning about different denominations and what makes them distinctive from one another.

On the 4th of February we had our second visit from Bp. Martins in 10 days, this time for his official annual visitation. We took the opportunity with Bp. Martins’ visit to honor Deacon Don Coventry for his years of service to St. John’s and the Diocese. We had our annual Pancake and Jambalaya dinner on February 13th. Stations of the Cross began every Friday at 6:00 pm in the Nave on February 16th.

Richard A. Swan+, Rector

St. Luke’s
Springfield, IL

We had good season of Advent and celebrated the Incarnation at St. Luke’s, despite the ebbs and flows of the winter. The Bishop’s Visitation was rescheduled to the Fourth Sunday of Advent, and one person was confirmed at the service. Christmas food and treat bags were prepared by one of our families and distributed to all children attending the Christmas services.

Due to extremely cold weather, we did not have our planned celebration of the Epiphany with Trinity, Jacksonville. We decided to gather on the Feast of the Presentation instead. We began the service with the blessing of candles and a Candelmas Procession. Fr. Denney preached and Fr. Brooks celebrated. We also enjoyed the beginning of a choir -- a solid quartet that kept us going during the procession and carried us through some beautiful but not so familiar Presentation hymns. Following the service, we shared a meal from our neighborhood barbeque place, Popeye’s. Attendance was good on what turned out to be the coldest night of that week. We are planning to gather again for the Great Vigil of Easter, this time in Jacksonville.

On Sunday, January 21, we welcomed the Rev. Russ and Heidi Smith, SAMS missionaries in Chile, who were on home leave to visit supporting congregations around the country -- St. Luke’s has supported their work for over 20 years. It was wonderful to hear of their work, to see pictures of those with whom they minister and learn of the vitality of the church in a remote area of South America. Both have roots in Illinois, and Heidi is one of SAMS’ longest serving missionaries. Incidentally, SAMS, once the South American Missionary Society, is now known as the Society of Anglican Missionaries and Senders, recognizing
that they now support missionaries in thirty countries on five continents. Our adult class is completing its study of 1-2 Peter and Jude, and will begin a 12-week study of Romans in Lent, again using materials from the Knowing the Bible series edited by J. I. Packer. Our group is a regular and faithful one, with connections to all three Episcopal congregations in Springfield, and forms the core of the congregation for the Tuesday weekday mass at St. Paul’s. St. Luke’s is also continuing our weekly African Bible Study and monthly Men’s Prayer Breakfast.

Episcopal Food Ministries, supported and staffed by members of all three churches, continues to prepare meals for the homeless, working from the kitchen at St. Luke’s. The offering from the Thanksgiving Service at St. Luke’s (also attended by some from Christ Church), was given for this ministry.

For the second year, the women of St. Luke’s prepared over 160 “Blessing Bags” for distribution to people on the street. Consisting of food items, gloves, toiletries and other comfort items, the bags present an opportunity to share the Love of Christ and show concern to those out in the weather. A full schedule is planned for Lent, including Stations of the Cross on Fridays. Parishioners have been invited to join the Good Book Club as part of their Lenten discipline. The Club, with materials prepared by Forward Movement, will take us through Luke, beginning February 11 and continuing throughout Lent, and Acts, with daily readings throughout Eastertide. (Note: RenewalWorks, a Forward Movement research-based initiative, has data from nearly half a million participants that identify scripture engagement as a key catalyst for spiritual vitality in congregations and for individuals. See www.GoodBookClub.org.) We go forward with anticipation.

Shawn W. Denney+, Vicar

The Clergy of the Deanery are looking at an opportunity to meet together for a meal in Springfield in the near future.

(The Very Rev.) Richard A. Swan+, Dean
**DIOCESAN CALENDAR**

**MARCH 2018**

- **04** Bishop w/ Cathedral Church of St. Paul, Springfield
- **11** Bishop w/ St. Christopher’s, Rantoul
- **16-18** ECW Annual Lenten Retreat, Toddall, Columbia
- **18** Bishop w/ St. Thomas’, Glen Carbon
- **24** Mass of Chrism, Cathedral Church of St. Paul, Springfield (11 a.m.)
- **25** PALM SUNDAY, Bishop w/ Cathedral Church of St. Paul, Springfield
- **30** GOOD FRIDAY

**APRIL 2018**

- **01** EASTER DAY, Bishop w/ Cathedral Church of St. Paul, Springfield
- **15** Bishop w/ St. Thomas’, Salem
- **29** Bishop w/ Trinity, Mt. Vernon

**JUNE 2018**

- **03** Bishop w/ Episcopal Parish of Alton
- **10** Bishop w/ St. Michael’s, O’Fallon
- **10-16** St. Michael’s Conference, St. Michael’s, O’Fallon
- **17** Bishop w/ St. John the Baptist, Mt. Carmel
- **21-24** Cursillo Weekend #36, Toddall, Columbia
- **24** Bishop w/ St. John’s, Albion

**JULY 2018**

- **01** Bishop w/ Church of the Redeemer, Cairo
- **01-07** Episcopal Church Camp, East Bay Camp, Hudson
- **19** Finance Department, Diocesan Center, Springfield (10 a.m.)

**CONTRIBUTE**

For more information about contributing to The Springfield Current, please see the message from Bishop Daniels inside the front cover.

Contributors will be acknowledged in a future issue.

**If you wish to contribute toward the ministry of The Springfield Current,** please make your check payable to “Diocese of Springfield” and mail it to the following address:

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Springfield, Illinois 62704

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**This calendar was correct at the time of printing, but is subject to change without notice.**

For the most recent Diocesan Calendar and the full prayer cycle calendar, please visit [www.episcopalspringfield.org](http://www.episcopalspringfield.org).