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The Steeple



May 19,
2021

The Weekly Newsletter of St. Luke's Episcopal Church

Paper Airplanes and Masks

I've come to love the way that Margaret gets excited about the littlest things. It's her way, one that allows me to breathe a sigh of relief most days and a reminder to not sweat the small stuff. On more than one occasion she has saved the life of the poor plant in my office and if it was up to her no one's coffee cup would ever run dry. I can't tell you how many times I have heard how beautiful our campus is and I think, we all know why. You should have seen the smile this week as she removed the old paper seating chart and the tears of joy that gathered in the corner of her eye.

Yes, Margaret makes me sing sometimes. And I think the reason why is because whenever I get the chance to talk with her, she speaks of her love for this place and you. It doesn't matter if she is swabbing the deck or pulling weeds – I think she thinks of all of us as she works and if that is not prayer, I don't know what is. She's got a heart of gold, that one, and I am so grateful for the ways she takes care of all of us.

As I mentioned above, Margaret removed the paper seating chart this week because as of this Sunday (under the advisement and guidance of church leadership and the diocese) we will begin relaxing a few protocols that we have had in place since the beginning of the pandemic. Please visit: <https://www.epiok.org/covid-19> and <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/guidance.htm> in order to get a more comprehensive understanding of how we've come to contextualize our response as a community. In particular, I'd like to address social distancing, reservations, the use of facemasks, and indoor eating at St. Luke's.

The most recent communication from the diocese, dated May 13th, allows leaders from a congregational level to make decisions on the ground in response to their local context. Understandably, these contexts vary, but the rule of thumb is based on the percentage of vaccinated people within the congregation. As of today, and after several personal conversations, I am confident that the majority of the congregation has been vaccinated or is in the process of receiving the vaccine and mindful of the protocols that go along with that in the interim.

There remains, however, a slight variance when considering folks who attend church regularly with those who don't. Nevertheless, I'm confident that at least 80% of those "able" to gather for worship in person have received the vaccine. With that metric in mind, we are no longer requiring reservations for church, managing a seating chart, or enforcing 6 feet of social distance between family groups. By now, I think everyone knows and respects personal space in ways that hadn't been considered before. The wearing of facemasks and indoor eating, however, require more careful and nuanced consideration.

This is new territory for all of us and I think the last thing any of us intends to do is to cause harm or willfully place someone in danger. Life together in community places an emphasis on the needs and concerns of the other right up there with our own and, in some cases, above our own especially when it serves the wholeness of the relationship. I say this because I do not want us to lose sight of the fact that folks around here have done the work necessary to maintain the safety of others even though personal conviction may at times differ from mandatory protocols.

As we find a way forward, I expect that love, care, and respect will continue to guide our personal and collective decisions in service to one another.

As of the latest diocesan communication and due to our community's diligence in receiving the vaccine I am removing the mandatory mask mandate. I am, however, asking those who have not been vaccinated and those who wish to wear a mask to feel free to do so. There is no judgement here as I see such decisions in concert with the precepts of caution and care. The process of discernment around when to wear a mask and when not to has already begun in public and in certain churches throughout the country. I remain confident in our ability to practice good discernment around the donning of masks and trust that wherever that discernment leads it will be in service to each other.

In addition to this Sunday's Festal Eucharist, we will have a reception to honor Ada and Jim Grillot. The reception will include food and there are some protocols and considerations I'd like for us to think about in preparation for the event. We've all learned quite a bit about viral load and transmission throughout the pandemic. Along with that, common sense and best practices have allowed us all to return to restaurants and public establishments the past few months. In concert with what we know and how we are starting to move forward, we will be offering individual portions of food that are "pre-packaged" to be served with seating to accommodate those who feel more comfortable eating outside and the option of a well-ventilated indoor venue as well. I hope you'll join us.

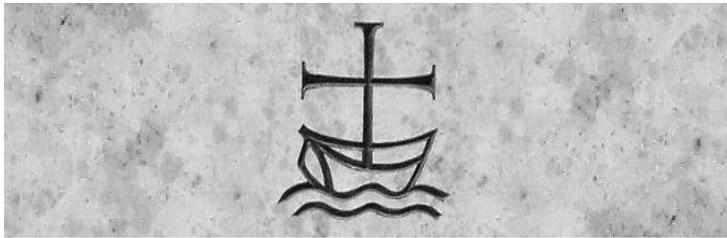
The pandemic is not over. We are responding to it contextually. The benchmark on which all decisions we make rests on love. I hope that you trust that these decisions set forth here are not made lightly, arbitrarily, or set in stone. I want and trust that you will give me feedback on these decisions. All of us want to feel safe here and all of us are in this together in ways we always haven't considered before. This is a liminal moment in the life of our parish, an in-between time, and there is no greater picture to illustrate that than that of the paper airplane I found next to a mask in the nave. A picture so to speak for a thousand words.

Faithfully,
Fr. Nick+



50th Anniversary

Congratulations and God's blessings to Glenn & Kris Bonner who celebrate their Golden Wedding Anniversary on May 22nd!



Easter Faith Forum Series

Resurrecting Wounds

Faith Forum 9:15 – 10:15 in Metcalf Hall

Session Six: May 23rd Communal Afterliving.

Agape Mission Volunteer Schedule

Thursday, May 27

10:45 am – 1 pm: Fr. Nick Phares, Darian Kedy, Becky Olsen, Dan Droege, Jo Baughman

12:45 pm – 2 p.m.: Carol Murphy, Steve Clark, Steve VanAken

Thursday, June 10

Agape will be closed for the week.

FLOWER DONATIONS

Realizing how much everyone enjoys seeing the beautiful flowers on the Altar each Sunday, it is also important to understand that they do cost money.

Please consider choosing a Sunday that is special to you as a memorial tribute or honoring an important event and contribute to the Altar Guild Flower Fund. The suggested amount is \$45 total for both vases, but any extra donation is appreciated.

You may then have the exact wording you wish in the Sunday bulletin for that specific day. Checks may be dropped in the Sunday offering basket or left in the church office or locked mailbox beside the North door of the church.

Many thanks,
Cheryl Fregin and Jo Baughman
Flower Chairmen

St. Luke's Prayer List

The prayer list can be found in the Sunday bulletin and on the St. Luke's website.

Call or email our office with prayer requests at 918-336-1212 or StLukesBartlesville@outlook.com

Pub Theology

Pub Theology is scheduled for May 27th, 7pm, at Painted Horse.

What is 'Pub Theology'? It's a time to gather informally and talk about different subjects around our core values of faith. What feeds your faith? Where did you see Jesus this week?

What literature are you reading that has had some inspiration for you?

A host of topics are brought up and discussed over drinks and appetizers.

(We pay our own tabs). There is usually a facilitator to throw out topics for discussion.

No politics, no gossip, and what is discussed in Pub Theology that is personal stays in the group. Respect the dignity of every person. It's a fun and relaxed time to get to know each other. Call Roseanne in the church office and let her know if you will be joining us so we can have enough tables set up at Painted Horse.

If you have any questions, contact Fr Nick, Penny Williams, or Nancy McGee.

We will be happy to share. Let's share some theology!



Regular Office Hours

Monday – Thursday 9:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Please note that even during office hours, the doors are locked per COVID-19 protocol. If you need to come in, just ring the north entrance bell or call the office at 918-336-1212.

Bereavement Team 1

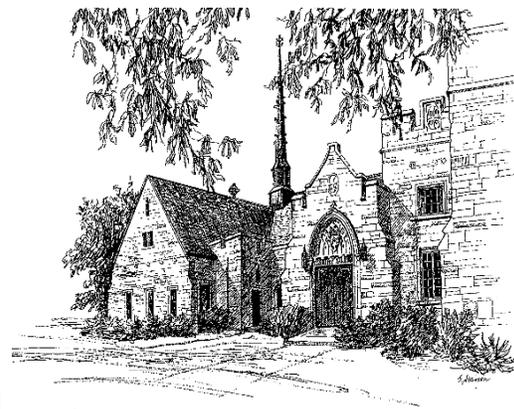
Susie Clark, Nancy Woods, Sally Lindsey, Jeanne Julstrom.

Connecting with St. Luke's

To learn various ways to connect at St. Luke's, visit our website at: <http://episcopalbartlesville.org/>

Alert on solicitations...

Be aware – No one from St. Luke’s will request gift cards or other monetary support through email. If you receive such a message in your email, it is spam. All financial requests/special appeals at St. Luke’s go through normal channels and any



Birthdays and Anniversaries, May 19 – June 2

Birthdays

Nancy Megee, 19th
Steve Martin, 19th
Jim Brooks, 20th
Peter Julstrom, 20th
Linda Maloney, 22nd
Ed Beasley, 24th
Susie Clark, 24th
Gretchen Hoyt, 25th
Heather Boyle, 28th
Jim Liehr, 28th
Carol Murphy, 28th
Betty Hardin, 29th
Kevin Clem, 29th
Fr. Bob Gates, 31st

Anniversaries

Wendy & David Hall, 21st
Kris & Glenn Bonner, 22nd

St. Luke’s Episcopal Church Contacts:

The Reverend Nick Phares, Rector
269-788-7063; RevPhares@outlook.com

Dolores McCreary, Choir Director/Organist
918-397-4828 dolome37@gmail.com

Roseanne McKee, Secretary; 918-336-1212;
Email: StLukesBartlesville@outlook.com

Keeli Droege, Christian Education Coord.;
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St. Luke’s Vestry Members

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