

# St. James' E-pistle: **SPECIAL EDITION**

A Letter from the Rector for April 10, 2020

Dear People of St. James,

I write to you today in the midst of the Holy Triduum, the most sacred season of our Church year. Though this has certainly not been the Holy Week that any of us expected or wanted this year, we are rapidly growing into new ways of being Church together that we probably could never have imagined possible just a few weeks ago. While we can all count our sacrifices and grieve our losses, it is undeniable that new opportunities have come our way of late to reach beyond our faithful core and into a wider community around us. Last night, for example, nearly a hundred people stopped in to our online gathering in the Garden of Repose for Maundy Thursday. Even though many of those visitors may have stayed for only a short while, all had a taste there of what St. James' is about, what we hold sacred, and where we find our resilience through trying times such as these.

Today, we will be open once again for worship for Good Friday, beginning at 3pm. This Liturgy of the Day will be simultaneously released at that time on Facebook and on our YouTube page, and may also be watched on our parish website [here](#). Your bulletin for that Good Friday service is available for download [here](#). Also, at any time after noon today, you may walk The Stations of the Cross with members of The Episcopal Church in Connecticut. The video presentation is posted to [the ECCT YouTube channel](#), as well as on [Facebook](#).

Tomorrow, we will mark that sorrowful day Jesus that spent in the tomb, with our Holy Saturday Prayer Service at 9am. Lasting about 20 minutes, this service will include a reading of one of the most ancient homilies composed for the day. This homily was preached not long after the last New Testament Scriptures were written, and long before the Creeds of our faith were settled. I invite you to set a little time apart on Holy Saturday, and hear Bishop Melito of Sardis' imaginative and theological reflection on what happened on the first Holy Saturday.

On Saturday evening, we are all invited to join Episcopalians throughout Connecticut for a

"Sharing of the Easter Light" at 8pm, again on the ECCT YouTube page and Facebook. Then, at 10am on Easter morning, we will gather together again online for a very special ECCT service with worship leaders spread through every corner of our state. Finally, we'll close the Triduum back home at St. James', with a Noonday Prayer Service for Easter with Sermon to mark the end of this most unusual Lenten season and Holy Week this year.

Beginning next week, we at last turn the page of our calendar to Eastertide! Our pattern of daily worship and prayer will continue through the coming days, to offer us a chance to reconnect with one another and to center ourselves through these extraordinary days. One reminder that I have is that our M/W/F offerings of Compline at 9pm, our Tues/Thurs Evening Prayer services at 8pm, and our Morning Prayer service at 9am on Saturday on Zoom are all directly accessible through the calendar on our parish website. In the description of the service, you will also find an option to dial in with a telephone. One pastoral request I have for you: please help raise awareness of this option throughout the parish, especially for those without computer access, but who would be interested in dialing in and participating in our corporate prayer life via their home phone. Many are struggling with isolation during these difficult days, and a little assistance from fellow parishioners will help everyone stay connected.

Next Sunday, we will continue our Sunday Morning Prayer services at 9am, as we have throughout Lent. Then, a new addition to our Sunday Schedule will be a Virtual Coffee Hour via Zoom. The "Zoom Room" will open at 10am, and stay open through the hour, so you are welcome to drop in as you are able to informally check in with your friends at St James'. And who knows, you might even make a new friend while you are there! So, please do remember to introduce yourself, and be sure your name appears on your video stream the way you would like for us to call you.

There will be much more news to share about our continuing vitality as a parish family in the coming days, on the other side of Easter. But for now, it is Good Friday. Let us look to the ground beneath our feet so that we may walk these last days of Holy Week without stumbling, and be fully present to the gift of this precious day that awaits us.

Your fellow sojourner on The Way,

*Fr. Dustin+*