

March 15, 2018

“Our mission is to celebrate God’s transforming Love in Jesus, by following where Jesus’ Love is calling us to serve the community”

On Sunday, March 18:

- 8 am Said Eucharist
- 10 am Sung Eucharist
- 11:15 Coffee Hour
- Fr Roy Cole will be our celebrant.
- No Sunday School

Inside this issue:

- “On Gun Violence” a letter from our Bishops
- Statement from the House of Bishops regarding gun violence
- “Spring Cleaning” a sermon by Br Mark Brown from the SSJE website
- Meetings and Church Service schedules through the month of March

Announcements of Events Coming Up:

- Remember the St Patrick’s dinner at St John’s on March 17.

**God loves you.
No exceptions.**



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Ascension This Week

A Letter from Our Bishops regarding Gun Violence: A Day of Prayer in Our Churches on March 14, and the March for Our lives on March 24 (This letter was released on March 13, 2018)

Our Dear Brothers and Sisters,

We your bishops returned this weekend from the Spring Meeting of the House of Bishops in Camp Allen, Texas. While the theme, and the learnings, of this meeting were centered on resources for the Evangelism by the church, we also spent time in discussion of and prayer regarding critical issues which are demanding the attention of our country and our church. One of those issues has to do with the epidemic of gun violence and mass shootings in America, with a particular response to the killing of seventeen high school students in Parkland, Florida last month. From those discussions, a statement was drafted and placed before the House, and then accepted as reflecting the mind of the House and published. We fully support this statement (included below), while recognizing that it is, finally, rather modest under the circumstances of the public urgency from which it arose.

ON GUN VIOLENCE

We know the diocese we serve. We know that there are people in the farther and more rural parts of our diocese who live all year on the meat they harvest in hunting season. Who also keep guns for protection against dangerous people and wild or diseased animals. We know that for many people guns are necessary tools more than they are weapons. But we do not forget the urban centers of our diocese, where mothers lie awake at night worrying for their children on violent streets. We have joined the Mothers' March in the South Bronx, with that multitude of women carrying the pictures of their lost children. The possession and use of guns exists on a spectrum across our diocese just as it does across our country, and we believe that the inability of people of good will to talk to each other across those cultures has created much of the paralysis in our national debate about gun ownership and gun violence.

Then came Parkland. The eloquence, through tears, of the young people of Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School has commanded the attention of America, as they have called for legislators to enact common sense gun laws to reduce the likelihood of the kind of mass shooting they experienced. And they are changing the national debate. In the words of these young people we have heard their great sense of betrayal in the larger society which has utterly failed to protect our own communities and our own children in the face of shooting after shooting after shooting. "We are going to have to be the adults in this situation," one young person said. "Our generation will fix this problem." And they have called for a mass gathering on March 24 to bring this movement into the light and demonstrate solidarity for one another and give voice to this pain and these losses and these demands.

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March 14 and March 24

We are on their side. We are asking our parishes tomorrow to keep their churches open for prayer, to make special intention at our altars for the victims of gun violence, and at noon, where possible, to toll bells for each of the seventeen victims of the Parkland shooting. And we are inviting everyone to participate in the March For Our Lives gatherings on March 24. We intend to make it possible for all young people in the Diocese of New York who wish to join in the public demonstration on that day to do so. It will be a very large gathering in Washington, DC. We also expect there to be a sizeable gathering in New York City. Buses to Washington, DC are being organized by Trinity Parish Wall Street with a priority for transporting young people. Those who want to be part of that trip are asked to **contact Trinity directly**. When we have further information about the details of a New York City demonstration, and meeting points for Episcopalians, we will post that on the **Diocesan website**. We very much encourage you to join us.

But while these young people are rightfully deserving of our admiration, no less so are the young African Americans who have, through the Black Lives Matter Movement, laid before us the account of lives lived in the constant fear of violence, and of the many young black lives that have been lost to random, criminal or institutional gun violence. Their voices are not forgotten by the House of Bishops or our church, and we are determined that their pain must not be lost, but by the grace of God, there may now be a chorus of a million young people joined across race and community and culture that will finally awaken our nation to the terrible cost of all this shooting, and to the hopes and lives of all of God's people.

The Book of Lamentations begins with the prophet sitting above the ruined city of Jerusalem and asking the plaintive question, "Is it nothing to you, all ye who pass by?" May we on March 24, who follow our Lord in the way of life, demonstrate that it is not nothing to us. It is everything.

STATEMENT OF THE HOUSE OF BISHOPS

Episcopal Church House of Bishops
Advocacy to End Gun Violence
March 7, 2018

"I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live." (Deuteronomy 30:19)

At this critical moment young people of the United States are inviting us to turn away from the nightmare of gun violence to the dream of choosing life. The young people of Parkland, Florida are calling for elected officials to:

- ban the sale of assault weapons
 - prohibit the sale of high capacity magazines
- close loopholes in background checks
- Others are seeking to:
- ban the sale of bump stocks
 - raise the age to 21 years to purchase firearms
- challenge the National Rifle Association to support safe gun legislation.

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We, the bishops of The Episcopal Church, wholeheartedly support and join with the youth in this call to action.

At the same time, we acknowledge that black and brown youth have continuously challenged the United States to address the gun violence that they and their communities are experiencing. We repent that, as bishops, we have failed to heed their call.

As bishops we commit to following the youth of the United States in their prophetic leadership. To that end we will observe a day of Lament and Action on March 14, one month to the day after the shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School. We pledge ourselves, and we invite our dioceses, to participate in the "March for our Lives" on March 24 in Washington DC and in cities and towns across the United States. We recognize the urgency of this moment and we recommit to working for safe gun legislation as our church has called for in multiple General Convention resolutions. In addition, we pledge ourselves to bring the values of the gospel to bear on a society that increasingly glorifies violence and trivializes the sacredness of every human life.

We will walk with the youth of the United States today and into the future in choosing life.

Save the Date: Meetings and Church Services through the month of March —

Lenten Series - Ascension Undercroft Sun 9-9:50 AM with Charlie and Beth Brown or Thurs with Fr. Mark at the Rectory at 7PM-8:30

Saturday, March 17: St Patrick's dinner at St John's Canterbury House —
6:30 PM Eccelston Hall

Sunday, March 18: Vestry Meeting, Parish House

Sunday, March 25 - Palm Sunday: St Martha's Bake Sale. After the 8AM and 10AM services in the Undercroft.

Thursday, March 29: Maundy Thursday service, 7:30PM in the Sanctuary

Friday, March 30: Good Friday service, 7:30PM in the Sanctuary

Saturday, March 31: Easter Vigil at St Paul's, 7:30PM

Sunday, April 1: Holy Eucharist, one mass at 10:00AM, in the Sanctuary.
An Easter Egg hunt will follow on the church lawn.

Saturday, April 7: Fr Babb installed as Rector of Christ Church at 11AM.



"Spring Cleaning"

"Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." Verse 11 of Psalm 51, one of the great penitential Psalms of the Bible. The immediate concern of the Psalmist is being cleansed of sin. But the idea of a "clean heart" and "renewed spirit" has a wider resonance.

Our journey of faith is a journey: we're a-goin', from one place to another—and to another and another. Which means leaving places, leaving some things behind.

A clean heart and renewed spirit can mean a kind of spring cleaning and refurbishing of the rooms of our minds, a kind of spiritual reordering and redecorating. The clutter can get clutterier and clutterier: we can end up with all kinds of stuff in our heads that "doesn't spark joy". We may need to do some serious sweeping up and sweeping out. Furnishings that once seemed so fresh become dated. Colors fade. Dust bunnies pile up in the corners of our minds. Sometimes it means a wholesale pitching things out and starting over. Or that favorite old Victorian sofa might look really good with a fresh new fabric.

Lent is a good time to take stock of the furnishings of our hearts and minds. A good time to hang on to what still "sparks joy" (that turn of phrase is from Marie Kondo, author of the best seller about de-cluttering and reorganizing). Lent is a good time for fresh directions, new paths, new spiritual furnishings. A good time to get out the brooms and mops, check out fabric swatches and color charts. Read a new book or two, try out a new direction, some new spiritual practice. Maybe it's time to travel abroad, spiritually speaking...

One thing we can be very sure of in life: wherever we are is not where we're going. It may be a good place to be, and we can thank God for that. But God always has more in mind.

Create in us clean hearts, O God, and renew our minds. Help us to make room for the new things you desire for us. And show us the fresh pathways of your spring time Spirit.

Posted on the SSJE website by Br Mark Brown, February 17, 2016

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