

Wednesday Information - December 16, 2020

Dear friends,

Let's hope the rain we are seeing today will have eased by December 21. That night there will be a bright star in the heavens, caused by the great conjunction of the planets Jupiter and Saturn. It will be the closest conjunction between these two since 1623 and the closest observable since 1226.

In ancient days people didn't think of stars as planets, but as the lights of their ancestors who had gone to heaven. The star over Bethlehem was different, however. It was brighter than all the other stars and guided the Magi to the baby Jesus. They came as the first pilgrims to worship before the Lord.

This year, the thought that another bright star will appear in the sky at Christmas fills me with curiosity and wonder. The world is filled with signs and wonders, some great and some small. A symbol of Christ's light appearing in the darkness of our present age reminds us of God's presence among us. The second century theologian St Irenaeus wrote:

"There is one God, who by his Word and Wisdom made and ordered all things. . . . His Word is our Lord Jesus Christ who in these last times became man among men, that he might unite the end with the beginning, that is, Man with God."

May you have a blessed week!

Father David

A MESSAGE FROM THE RECTOR

Governor John Carney has announced a new Stay-at-Home advisory, strongly advising all Delawareans to avoid gathering indoors. This was in response to the recent surge of COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations in Delaware.

Following on from the governor's advisory, Bishop Brown has suspended all in-person worship throughout the Episcopal Church in Delaware until further notice.

Whilst we remain closed to public worship, we will continue to live-stream services on Sunday mornings with a small crew, for the benefit of those who are able to watch online.

I look forward to seeing all of you some time in the New Year. In the meantime, stay warm and have a Merry Christmas!

With prayers and blessings

Father David

Christmas Service

Thursday December 24. **Holy Eucharist at 4 pm. Note that this will be our one Christmas service for 2020.** The scheduled Eucharist at 7 pm service has been cancelled. Our service at 4 pm will be live-streamed on Facebook and later uploaded to YouTube. See the links below.



[Facebook](#)

[Youtube](#)

Upcoming events at St. Martha's

Watch and Pray

Wednesday, **December 16 at 7 pm.** Session Four: “A Witness to the Light” - an evening Advent Course by Zoom. To join the group, please contact Father David at davidberesford@gmail.com.

SMVBC

Thursday, **December 17th**, 3:00 – 4:00 PM Book club is discussing “Falling Upward: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life”, by Richard Rohr. If you would like to join the discussion please contact Rick Legeer at rlegeer@comcast.net by Thursday at 9:00 AM so you can be added to the zoom invitation.

Preparing for Christmas

Friday, **December 18**, 1 - 2 pm. Advent meditations and Bible readings, from the book by Richard Rohr. To join the group, please email admin@stmarthasbethanybeach.org.

Holy Family Sunday

Sunday, **December 27, Holy Eucharist at 9 am.** Commemoration of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph.

To receive regular news updates, including links to events from St Martha's online, please contact admin@stmarthasbethanybeach.org.

Committee Updates

Outreach

Community Food Pantry, located at Salem United Methodist Church, is looking for volunteers to help with their monthly Friday food preparation and Saturday drive thru distribution. If you can help December 18th or 19th, please contact Joyce Dennis (302-732-6565) or Myra Bare (302-732-9402).

Search

The Search Committee met on Monday, December 14, and continued to work on the Community Ministry Portfolio. With reading and writing assignments in hand, the committee will take a Christmas break and next convene on January 4, 2021.

Stewardship

As we come to the end of the year, please return your pledge card if you have not already done so. Along with the gift of time and talents, the church relies upon the financial giving of its members for its survival. Particularly in this past year, we have seen a marked decline in our plate income. In addition, if you have not already made your planned giving this year, please send your payment to reach us before the end of the year. Thank you.

Pastoral Care

Dear Saint Martha's Community—as we once again close our Church for in person participation, I want to remind everyone that the Pastoral Care Team is here for you. Do not feel alone; we can help with meals, shopping or medication pick up, or most importantly, we are here for conversation, communication and togetherness. You can call me any time, Elsa Fuentes, at 732-216-6875. Blessed Advent!

Flower Guild

Flower forms were mailed out last week with the Christmas letter. The cost is \$25.00 or whatever you would like to give. You may return the form to the church by December 20th or you may call Jaclyn at 302-539-7444 or email her at admin@stmarthasbethanybeach.org with the information.

Two more reminders:

- If you donate Christmas flowers, they will remain in the church until after the taping for the January 3rd service. They can be delivered to you after that.
- It is now time to sign up for altar flower donations for 2021. Please call or email Jaclyn with your chosen dates and notations - 302-539-7444 or admin@stmarthasbethanybeach.org. The suggested amount is \$35, but any amount is appreciated.

United Thank Offering

We are currently receiving our ingathering for the year to support next year's grants for our United Thank Offering period. 100 % of our contributions are used for programs in the United States and abroad. e.g. a daycare facility in Georgetown, and a community vehicle in Tanzania. Any administrative costs or other fees are supplied by funds from other accounts. Thank you for your support.

PLEASE MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: ST. MARTHA'S CHURCH AND NOTE ON THE MEMO LINE "UTO".

Capital Ringers

Will be presenting their concert, "**Tidings of Comfort and Joy**," virtually this season. Capital Ringers currently owns the largest set of handbells and handchimes on the Delmarva Peninsula. The concert includes 10 songs that will be sure to bring you holiday cheer. St. Martha's Episcopal Church has purchased the video link to the concert. This allows all members to log in and experience the concert as many times as they would like from Dec 6th through February 2021. The link to the concert site is shown below. There are also directions for viewing the concert on your tablet, laptop, or smart tv. There is also information about donating to the Capital Ringers so that they can continue to provide high quality concerts for the residents of Delaware. If you have any questions, please contact Dave Kemper. We look forward to seeing them in person next year!

<https://www.capitalringers.org/capital-ringers-productions/> Contact Dave or the office for the password.

Prayer List

In 2021 we are planning to update our current prayer list. If there is someone whom you would like to place on the list, please let Jaclyn in the office know. She will keep a record of that person who will remain on the list for four weeks. At the end of that period, their name will be removed unless we hear that they should remain on. This will make sure our prayer list remains up to date. Thank you.

Please give by mail or website donate button

Please continue to support our mission work by submitting your pledge to St. Martha's Episcopal Church, PO Box 1478, Bethany Beach DE 19930 or give via the donate button on the website where there is a box to note your contribution purpose: <https://www.stmarthasbethanybeach.org/make-donation-or-pledge/>.



The office will be closed Monday, December 28 and Tuesday, December 29th. In addition, Jaclyn has off on Thursday, December 24th. All voicemails and emails will be returned when the office reopens on Wednesday, December 30th. If you have a pastoral emergency, please contact Father David at (302) 468-9062.

Prayer List

Bob Bauer, Ruth Simone, Ron Sutton, Martha, Wayne Argo, Paul Stutts, Justin Bence, James Moore, Jr., Evan Ballard, Cameron Vlassis, Charmaine Zoller, Tara Sprouse, Don Louk, Joey, Sara Suerose, Nancy Moore & family, Bill Ensor, Katherine Hobbs, Joe, Nancy Reed, Leigh Alexander Loeber, Ron Pickup, William L Brintnall, Laura N. Brintnall, Cuthie Family, Janice Fritsch, Cassandra Riddle, Pauline Wise, Becky Warlow, Jean Bunker, Carolyn Clarke, August Goeller, Bev and Jack Shubert, Margaret Duval, Marilyn Hoffman, Clari Hernandez, AJ Evans, Robert Hicks, Noel Tuck, Joanne Grant, Mimi Drew, John Conway, Keith Smith, Jim Lucas, Christine Mains, Lois Allen, Tony Combas, Catherine Jordan, Leo Mozzoni, Chris Riccardi, Marie Hogsten, David and Sue Nilsson and Harry Burlew

For Our Serving Military: Quinn Barber, HM3 Kevin Murphy, Conner Warlow, Daniel Olnick

Prayer LIST – If you would like to add someone to the Prayer List please contact the office at (302) 539-7444 or email admin@stmarthasbethanybeach.org. The Prayer List is a way to ask for prayer from the whole congregation for a loved one who is dealing with a stressful issue such as chronic illness, job problem, or other personal problem. Only the person's name is listed. Names stay on the list for two months unless and until renewed.

Prayer CIRCLE – These volunteer prayer warriors pray for a person who has asked for urgently needed short-term prayer for a specific purpose like surgery or an upcoming medical test. These requests are confidential. You can email prayercircle@stmarthasbethanybeach.org for Prayer Circle intercessions. You can also contact Jaclyn at admin@stmarthasbethanybeach.org or 539-7444. Voicemail messages are being monitored and you will receive a return call during normal office hours (Monday-Thursday, 9am-1pm).

Pastoral CARE –If you have a pastoral care need, please call Elsa or Carol at (732) 216-6875 or contact the office using the email address or phone number listed above.

Pastoral Care EMERGENCY – Please contact Father David Beresford at (302) 468 9062.

Holy Jesus,
by being born one of us,
and lying humbly in a manger,
you show how much God loves the world.
Let the light of your love always shine in our hearts,
until we reach our home in heaven,
and see you on your throne of glory.
Amen.