

NOTE: Our newsletter is in a different form this month as I didn't want Sheryl to have to spend any time working with it. As of this time, Don is still looking for a priest for February Sundays. We will have a priest on Ash Wednesday and on March 1st. (SEE UP-COMING TOWARD THE END FOR DETAILS.)

Dear Friends in Christ,

I have something interesting to share this month. You may have heard of the podcast *All Things Episcopal*. They say it is designed for younger members of the faith, but whenever I listen to it, I always enjoy it and learn something.

I recently heard a podcast from December 19, 2025, on the Eucharist. The host was talking with Mtr. Katie Knowll-Levin, originally from Kansas but now rector at St. Thomas Episcopal Church in Springdale, Arkansas.

Everything below will be from notes I took from the printed version as I wanted to share what she had to say. You may want to listen to the podcast yourself to hear it all. (I had time when we had all that cold and stayed in 😊)

Mtr. Katie began with a cute story of a little two-year-old referring to communion as the "appetizer" (a word she had recently learned) because coffee hour followed. Mtr. Katie loved it as the Eucharist is often referred to as a "foretaste of the heavenly banquet." (When I looked it up, the Episcopal Church said it is called that because as the heavenly banquet, it is believed to be "a present, earthly participation in the eternal, joyful communion with God, foreshadowing the final gathering of believers in heaven.")

When asked why we celebrate the Eucharist, she reminded us that, first of all, Jesus commanded us to do it "in remembrance of him." In the gathered body of Christ, with all of us together, we participate in Jesus' life, death, resurrection, and ascension. It is our participation until His second coming and through our participation in the sacrament, we participate in his coming again TO US, right at that time.

Mtr. Katie called us a sacramental people, believing we encounter the Divine through the sacraments. (Sacrament is defined in the catechism in the prayer book as "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace.") The first sacrament most of us ever received was the sacrament of Baptism, a sacrament that happens only once as the Holy spirit descends upon us and we are "marked as Christ's own forever." That is why the Episcopal Church recognizes baptisms performed in other denominations. The Eucharist, another of our seven sacraments, is our continued participation in the life of Christ through the Eucharist, which is why we are also referred to as liturgical people. What we do together, all of us as the body of Christ, during the Eucharist is recall "what Jesus did for us, dying on the

cross and forgiving our sins, saving us from a life of sin and death” and we do this EACH time we partake in the Eucharist.

As you know, there are many names for what we call the Eucharist, among them The Lord’s Supper, Holy Communion, The Divine Liturgy, and The Mass. These names all come from different paths. She feels the Lord’s Supper is particularly appropriate because in the Eucharist, “we recall Jesus’ last supper, and we recall it in a way that we’re almost bringing it to the forefront. “Time traveling – like Jesus is there with us in the moment.”

Calling it The Mass comes from Catholic roots. The altar book the priest uses is called the missal and we are dismissed from the missal at the end. The root word for those words is the same root word as for “mass.” (She reminded me of Fr. Mike and how he calls our dismissal our “mission” into the world because with the dismissal we are being sent back into the world to spread the word in our daily lives.)

She reminds us that Eucharist means Thanksgiving, and it is “us recalling God’s saving acts, especially his saving act of sending his Son to be with us,” fully God and fully human, truly able to understand and identify with what we go through in our lives.

It is our sacrifice of Thanksgiving to God for all that he has done to save us, especially through Jesus. She reminds us that “God loves us and wants to be with us and wants to be in community with us.” In the Eucharist, the Holy Spirit comes down into the bread and wine we have brought up as “fruits of our labors” and becomes for us the Body and Blood of Christ. When we take Jesus into us, we are restored; Jesus has come to us. Again, and again, each time we attend the Eucharist.

I could share more, but this is already too long. I think you will enjoy the podcast! I hope you can find it.

Yours in Christ,

UP-COMING NEWS:

February 15: Our Annual Meeting will be held after the service with a potluck. We will elect officers and delegates at this meeting. NOTE: This is a change from the first proposed date. Sam has been sick and is still working on the Parochial Report.

February 18: Ash Wednesday services will be at 11:00 with Fr. Mark with us. We have books for Ash Wednesday daily readings.

March 1: Fr. Chas Marks, Canon for Common Mission, will be with us this day for Holy Communion. The Diocese is re-organizing so it can reach congregations more often than just the Bishop's Annual Visitation. We will enjoy having Fr. Chas with us.

UP-COMING EMAILS: The Presiding Bishop of The Episcopal Church has sent a letter to churches in light of the divisions in our nation, and I will be sending it as requested. I will also send a letter sent by the Presiding Bishop of the Methodist Church. I thought you might find it interesting.

Birthdays and Anniversaries:

Birthdays: February 11, **Linn Gretzinger**; February 24, **The Rev. Mike Kyle**; and February 29, **Becky Tarver**

Anniversaries: None

PRAYER LIST:

Special prayers continue for Rick, and for Don and Sheryl as they are with beside him. Sheryl will continue to send us updates as any more is known.

Healing: Fr. Mike, Augustus Hockaday, Kitty, Tina, Don, Kathy, Steve Sheline, Kirsten, Tom, Rauna, Sam, Elsie, Wes Skaggs, Dinah, Olga

Cancer: Christy, Pat, Micheal, Cindy McAvoy, Rev. Jenny Ketner, Debbie M., Suzanne, Ruana, Diane, Sylvia, Don, Sam, Connie, Joe Trogden, David Lee

Healthy pregnancies and safe deliveries: Elizabeth Gallegos and Amanda Parker

For Comfort, Strength, and Peace: Gail Cloutte, Pat Decker, Doug Johnson, Christy and Diane, Becky and John, Kathy and Mike, Zaha, Steve Sheline, Marie Hopkins, Linda C., Laurisa, Rick, Christopher, Craig (father) and Cam (son) Dobereiner, Connie, Jerry Key

The Departed: Darrell Goth (Rauna's uncle), Patricia Key

Others: For the divisions in our nation, peace and courage for all who live in fear, for calm heads in the presences of tension; for peace in the world; for those devastated by natural disasters; for those facing job loss and personal challenges

Thanksgiving: Family and friends, God's many blessings, and His constant presence in our daily lives, conclusion of formal treatments for Ruana and Sam and their journeys back to health.