

The Rainbow



APRIL 2020

GETTING TO KNOW LINDA AMMAR

Linda Ammar intersects with so many areas of Christ Episcopal life that it would be hard not to know at least one of her activities. If you're on the Altar Guild, you know that she's its director, responsible for setting the schedules and showing up even when no one can. If you're on the Vestry, you know she's a member. If you have cooked or cleaned up for a Parish Life function, you know she's the chair. And if you've volunteered for the Food Pantry, or the Union Mission, or the Fellowship Home Meals, you know she's always on hand as well – usually with a smile and a laugh. And if you read the Rainbow, as you are doing right now, you know she's on the committee that produces it each month.



Until very recently, when Christ Episcopal joined the world in social distancing as a consequence of the new coronavirus, if you had any business at the church, on any day, you might even have seen Linda walking (at her usual fast pace) through the halls, darting from one task to another.

But the truth is that as much time as Linda contributes to the life of our church, she's actually not always there. This busy woman has many other places to go and people to see – including a recent trip to beautiful Kauai, known as the Garden Isle of Hawaii, for a family wedding, just before almost everyone's travel came to an abrupt halt. When she's not outside in her yard gardening, she's likely to be playing pickleball, or briskly walking miles around Bluefield, or taking care of her dogs. In addition, she loves to read and cook – and if you haven't been lucky enough to be at church for one of her Coffee Hours, you need to put it on your list when in-person services resume.

Much of her time is spent with her grandchildren, Madelyn and Jocelyn Simon, 6 and 9 years old, who she says keep her young. They live in Bluefield, WV, with their parents: Linda's daughter, Erin, and her husband, Freddy. Erin is a deputy sheriff in Raleigh County, and Freddy teaches and coaches at Bluefield High School, so Linda spends many hours taking care of the girls and getting them from one place to another. She reads to their classes, when time allows, and this year she's been Homeroom Mom (or homeroom "MIMI!!!!" as she calls it) for Maddi's kindergarten class at Memorial Primary School. Linda's husband, Christopher Ammar, is deceased.

Linda was born and raised in Bluefield, WV, and grew up in Christ Episcopal. Her parents were Dan and Lois Wells, themselves lifelong Christ Episcopal members, and her sister, Teresa Wells, is retired and living in Princeton, WV.

Linda attended elementary school and junior high in Bluefield before going to St. Margaret's School in Tappahannock, VA, for high school. She graduated from Elon University in North Carolina, with a degree in physical education and health, and she has a master's degree from Marshall University in special education, with certifications in Mentally Impaired, Learning Disabled, Behavior Disordered and Autism. She worked at Pipestem State Park in recreation and at Bluefield State College before beginning a teaching career in special education, to which she devoted 25 years in Mercer and Boone counties before retiring last year.

What's next for Linda? On her bucket list are the following adventures:

- Swim with the dolphins
- Travel with the sled dogs in Alaska
- Volunteer (one more time!) at Best Friend's Sanctuary, a pet rescue and advocacy organization with the largest no-kill sanctuary, in Kanab, Utah
- Go on a safari to Africa.

Finally, Linda says she wants to live long enough to see her grandchildren become happy, healthy, productive members of society. And if the apples don't fall far from the tree, they will.



MONTHLY MINISTRY REPORTS

FOOD PANTRY

Thursday, March 19

- 90 bags prepared
- 58 Bags distributed
- No kerosene vouchers distributed

UNION MISSION

- March 11th

- 137 meals of BBQ, coleslaw
baked beans, brownies, and
beverages were served

Volunteers from Episcopal churches in Bluefield, WV, Pocahontas, VA, the Congregation Ahavath Sholom and the Cumberland Heights Baptist Church

REFLECTING WITH FATHER CHAD



This should be my busiest time of the year.

Lent is always a busy season for me. There are Lenten programs, special services, and the like that always keeps me on the run.

Holy Week is typically a blur of activity. Honestly, I wind up spending most of my time either at the church or working on something to ensure that our services for Maundy Thursday and Good Friday go off without a hitch. Then, in the midst of all that, is Easter planning and preparations for everything that goes into that morning's service.

I should be busy.

I should be busy with the little details of church work—like special bulletins, pulling the “once-a-year” items out of the sacristy with the Altar Guild, and fretting over if I’ve remembered every detail for a service. I should be doing a million little things to make sure our Holy Week and Easter are meaningful and beautiful, “dignified and in good order.” I should be planning on taking Communion to some of our shut-ins at this special time of year. I should be frantic, because that’s what I do this time of year.

Instead, I am sitting at home (for the most part). I read, I watch TV, I sit on my patio and listen to the birds singing in the trees, and I walk around my yard looking at all the beautiful Spring flowers that have sprouted up. I’m spending time playing games with my kids while the new warmth of spring shines around us. I felt the cool touch of freshly mowed grass under my feet.

And all the while, I keep thinking, “I should be busy.”

Yesterday, as I sat on my patio, I realized that I was taking in some of the things I have neglected over the last many years. In the hectic pace of my professional life, I had not spent the time to appreciate the regeneration and beauty all around me this time of year. Spring, the season of Easter, is usually the time I write off as when I’m “too busy” to do anything fun. It’s the time of year I focus on my work instead of on my world. This is a common feeling among clergy. I once heard another minister say, “Spring is just allergies and work.” I will admit that I have typically agreed with that.

Easter is about Resurrection—new life in the face of an old death. Easter is about hope and beauty and possibility. It's not about work. It's about Salvation and grace from above.

Slowing down at this fast-pace time of year for me has been, in some ways, an opportunity to connect again with what I preach—that God loves us beyond measure; that there is hope for a better day; that the old creation has been made new. While I certainly would not want this every Spring as a reminder, I am thankful that at least I have opportunity to reflect on it now.

Being mindful of the joys of new life in the way that the springtime makes it possible is the real work of Easter. It's not in perfect worship services or bulletins that guide visitors to a comfortable experience, or in making sure the right cloth is facing a certain way that my seminary professors taught me it ought to be done. It's about experiencing life—and its abundance after the appearance of death. It's about appreciating that God renews the world every year in flowers and birds and warm breezes that again touch our face. It's about learning new ways to love and take stock of what's important in your life.

I should be busy. I guess, in a certain way, I am.

I pray that during this strange and difficult time we make the most of our situation. Let us take the time that we can to appreciate the things great and small around us that make us mindful of God's love and devotion to us. Let us take the time to love God and to love each other—and, as the Presiding Bishop is fond of saying, “and while you're at it, love yourself.”

May this Easter bring us new faith in our Creator. May we find the Risen Christ in every newfound example of hope—from new flowers to worshipping at home. May we never fail to appreciate the beauty of God's world and its promise of grace to us all.

Amen.



For Doctors and Nurses (BCP page 460)

Sanctify, O Lord, those whom you have called to the study and practice of the arts of healing, and to the prevention of disease and pain. Strengthen them by your life-giving Spirit, that by their ministries the health of the community may be promoted and your creation glorified; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

A Prayer In Time of Great Sickness and Mortality (from the 1928 BCP)

O most mighty and merciful God, in this time of grievous sickness, we flee unto thee for succour. Deliver us, we beseech thee, from our peril; give strength and skill to all those who minister to the sick; prosper the means made use of for their cure; and grant that, perceiving how frail and uncertain our life is, we may apply our hearts unto that heavenly wisdom which leadeth to eternal life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

PRAYER LIST

Dorene Dimes, Bonnie Taylor, Joe Sanders, Lee Puckett, Sr., Mabeline & Elton Robinson, Bea Paine, Lynn Burney, Marilyn Denney, Donna Fortune, Bob and Peggy Walk, Susan Jewell, John Kersey, Martha Linkous, Sarah Irwin, Janet Slager, Kelly Cox, Mike McLeod, Maxine Stevenson, Dean Farmer, Bob Moore, Haddon Lazenby, Miffi Williams, Jack Burchette, Nick, JL, Cis Barrett, Linda Jones, Kathy, Carolyn



About nine years ago, Bea Paine reflected in her journal about Psalm 69:13.

Psalm 69:13

I keep right on praying to you, Lord, hoping this is the time you will show me favor. In your unfailing love, O God, answer my prayer with your sure salvation.

And from Bea's journal, as she took notes from her readings about the Psalm:

“When your situation seems hopeless, determine that no matter how bad things become, you will continue to pray. God will hear your prayer and he will rescue you. When others reject us, we need God most. Don't turn from your most faithful friend.”



For Guidance (BCP page 832)

Direct us, O Lord, in all our doings with thy most gracious favor, and further us with thy continual help; that in all our works begun, continued, and ended in thee, we may glorify thy holy Name, and finally, by thy mercy, obtain everlasting life; through James Christ our Lord. *Amen*

A Celtic Blessing

John O'Donohue was an Irish poet, philosopher and Catholic priest. An internationally known author and public speaker best known for popularizing Celtic spirituality, he passed away in 2008 at age 52.

“For Equilibrium, a Blessing”

By John O'Donohue

Like the joy of the sea coming home to shore,
May the relief of laughter rinse through your soul.
As the wind loves to call things to dance,
May your gravity be lightened by grace.
Like the dignity of moonlight restoring the earth,
May your thoughts incline with reverence and respect.
As water takes whatever shape it is in,
So free may you be about who you become.
As silence smiles on the other side of what's said,
May your sense of irony bring perspective.
As time remains free of all that it frames,
May your mind stay clear of all its names.
May your prayer of listening deepen enough
to hear in the depths the laughter of god.



NOTICE

Be sure to look for emails or on the website on Sundays and Holy Days for links to worship that Father Chad will be leading via YouTube.



Easter Sunday

Although we are unable to gather together to celebrate our Lord's resurrection the church will be decorated with flowers and lilies to mark the occasion. We may not be physically present in the building, but our common space will still give glory to God!

Fr. Chad will be on the front porch from 10:00am to 10:30am Easter Sunday, April 12, to give a special blessing to anyone who would like to drive by and receive one. Please do not get out of your car, simply drive by and wave (maybe even honk your horn!) as Fr. Chad blesses you!

APRIL 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5 The Sunday of the Passion: PALM SUNDAY	6	7	8	9 MAUNDY THURSDAY	10 GOOD FRIDAY	11 HOLY SATURDAY
12 The Sunday of the Resurrection: EASTER SUNDAY Drive by blessing from 10:00 am till 10:30am	13	14	15 Bagging for Food Pantry 7:00pm	16 Food Pantry 9:00 am – 11:00am	17	18
19 The Second Sunday of Easter	20	21	22	23	24	25 Saint Mark the Evangelist
26 The Third Sunday of Easter	27	28	29	30		

BIRTHDAYS

April 1 Alice Allen
 April 6 Shanley Paine
 April 13 Cici Dyer
 April 13 Jim Paine
 April 13 Katherine Lewis

April 15 Beka Steorts
 April 16 Phil Mahood
 April 16 Betty Nash
 April 17 Jeffrey Brannon
 April 18 Macon Clement

April 18 Will Puckett
 April 20 Tom Coughlan
 April 23 Ed Fortune
 April 24 Staci Thomas
 April 25 Clay Sudduth
 April 27 Dorene Dimes
 April 28 John Moir
 April 28 Zachary Toohey
 April 30 Paul Broyles, Jr.

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To our friends and family:



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