



# The Herald

St. Raphael the Archangel Episcopal Church

Vol. 61 No. 1 Lent 2026

## From Our Rector

### Lenten Happenings

#### Tuesday, February 17

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper  
5:30 – 7:30 pm

#### Wednesday, February 18

Ash Wednesday Services  
Noon and 6:30 pm

In the pocket of my jacket, the one I wear for walking around our neighborhood, the Beaumont & Cardinal Valley Trails, shopping at Kroger, running errands in cooler weather, I'm in the habit of carrying and holding something. This year, I have a tiny wooden heart with the word 'amazing' on one side and 'joy' on the other. In the other pocket is usually my phone. In all the hassles of 24 hour news & views, divisive language, challenges to peace, my tiny wooden heart is simply a prompt, a reminder, to be grounded in the amazing and the joyful. I think those two words are connected.



So that's why I started wondering what amazing joy we might find in the upcoming season of Lent. Can Lent be an opportunity for amazement and joyfulness?

Perhaps, in this time that offers reflection, turning and spiritual growth as we face hard questions of faith, Lent can offer opportunities for joy. Lent has mostly been associated with giving up certain habits, giving up sugar/chocolate, or giving up meat for fish and veggies. How about we look at doing something more profound with Lent this year – Ash Wednesday of February 18 through to Easter Sunday on April 5 – something that would look towards wholeness, peace, renewal; something for others; something for God. How about learning from one of the lesser-known saints, or focusing on understanding another country's historic and present challenges, or picking up the Bible study we have at church for this season by either 'Forward Movement' or 'Living Well'? How about using a concordance and studying the Biblical understanding of 'joy' (or any other word or name)? How about a retreat-like approach to Lent and Holy Week? How about committing to visiting a 'shut-in' member of your family or our church? How about getting outside as the weather warms – gardening, walking, even just sitting outside (Tobit's trace is a great location for that!). Let me know if you'd like any other ideas!

There's a joy that is found in self-reflection, service, gaining insight and understanding, and the new wisdom. Somehow there is also balance found in a consciously balanced and purposefully focused deeper connection to God and one another.

Have an amazing, joy-filled Lent!

With my love and prayers,

Rev Helen

## Senior Warden's Corner

Lent is coming, ready or not.

For most of you Lent might be just normal, something that you have experienced many times, and it's just part of the liturgical calendar. Maybe it's just like getting ready for all the Sunday services, and it's just part of the makeup of who you are, that it's just a piece of your life. Perhaps some of you are like me, never really dipping into the experience, relatively new in re-experiencing a church community, seeking a deeper understanding of Lent, or just wondering what it is all about? Sorry I can't promise any earthshattering, or spiritual awaking revitalizations, however, I can let you in on my planned journey for Lent.



*John Hazlett  
Sr. Warden*

The truth of what I have discovered in just a little research is that there is so much that has been written, experienced, talked, and stated about Lent that it's easy to get lost. I think for myself, and my plan for Lent is to reconnect and deepen my love for God through the practice of personal sacrifice, not as a religious duty, but freely given through self-discipline and willingness. Spending time in conversation with God through prayer, in the small moments and long quiet periods, and in giving of that precious commodity of time to others, seeking Jesus in others and building that relationship with others. I will be taking moments to repent, and listening for the Word of God in the whisper of the wind, the rays of sunshine, conversations with others, the laughter of children, and the joy of being given one more day to experience God's love.

Simple man, simple plan. One to grow in faith with Jesus and God during Lent. I hope you are making your plan, planning your own journey to grow in love with Jesus and God.

With Prayers and Love,

John Hazlett

Senior Warden



## A Musical Note



*Dr. Vicki Bell  
Organist & Choir  
Director*

Singing unites us! As we sing together in our churches, we connect with fellow congregants and create moments of unity as we follow the Episcopal tradition of music as a central part of our liturgy.

Our St. Raphael choir is small but mighty, and we love to sing together! We have grown in size and capability, and I am proud of the work done by our choristers. Have you ever wondered why we sing? I believe we sing to express emotions ranging from sadness to joy. Additionally, choral singing improves both our mental and physical health and forges strong social connections. I can personally attest to this; when I come to our St. Raphael choir rehearsals, I many times arrive a bit stressed, but leave feeling content and connected to our

charming choristers.

As we approach Lent, a season in which the texts and musical settings have a special depth of emotion and significance, we invite you to join us as we raise our voices in praise, thoughtfulness, and reflection.

On a final note, I am happy to report that today is the second anniversary of my appointment as your organist / choirmaster. With anticipation of what is to come, I look forward to my third year with you!

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### The Bach Marathon returns!

The Kentucky Bach Choir and the Lexington Chapter of the American Guild of Organists are sponsoring the annual Bach Marathon on Saturday, March 28, 2026, at St. Raphael Episcopal Church, Lexington! The event is free and open to the public. See the church website, [srex.org](http://srex.org), for start time and the day's schedule when the program is finalized.



Lord, who through-out these forty days for us did fast and pray,  
teach us with thee to mourn our sins, and close by thee to stay.

As thou with Satan didst contend and didst the victory win,  
O give us strength in thee to fight, in thee to conquer sin.

As though didst hunger bear and thirst, so teach us, gracious Lord,  
to die to self, and chiefly live by thy most holy word.

And through these days of penitence, and through thy Passiontide,  
yea, evermore in life and death, Jesus with us abide.

—*Claudia Frances Hernamann (1838 – 1898)*

## Money Matters

Thank you all so much for your generous pledges this year. While we didn't quite meet our goal, we were able to pass a budget with a modest surplus! Last year (2025) our budget had a nearly \$10,000 deficit. While we could afford this, due to some savings, it's far from ideal. The good news was that with the addition of the contract with Dream Care Learning Center, we were able to finish the year with only a \$6000 deficit.

Our new budget is still "lean," but does include a raise for our rector and continued support for the music program. As we navigate this year, which will include calling a new rector, we present a financial situation that is solid.

I am grateful for all who contribute to St. Raphael. Not just the financial part, but especially your contributions in the life of the parish. If you want to be more involved, we have space on the various committees which plan and organize our parish. Whether it's parish life (think food!) or finance (you too can review the budget every month!), communications (help spread the word!) or properties (you don't even have to get your dirty, unless you want to!), we need and value your help.

Stewardship is more than just a campaign every fall, it's a daily exercise in providing for our community. We are off to a great start this year, please help make it a banner year.



*Chris Bollinger*  
*Finance Committee*

## Formation & Fellowship



**Lectio Divina** is offered on Wednesdays at 4 pm. No preparation needed, just drop in.

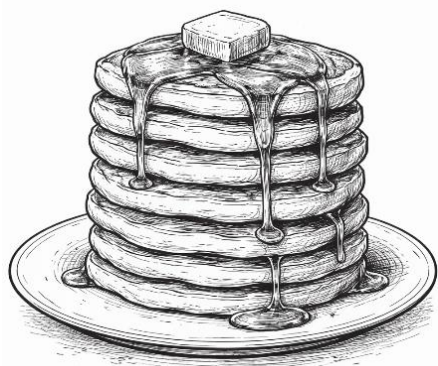
**Spirit Yoga** with Lelia, Thursdays at 6:15 pm. This program incorporates spiritual centeredness with yoga moves. Contact Lelia for more information at 859-338-1504 (call or text) or email: [brannenlc@gmail.com](mailto:brannenlc@gmail.com)

**Lunch & Sermon Reflection** Sundays after the 11 am service (approx. 12:15 pm) at a local restaurant. Locations change each Sunday and are shared during the announcements.

**Sages & Friends**, March 19 at 11:30 am at Monarca Authentic Mexican Restaurant on Lane Allen. Let Barbara Connell know if you plan to be there at [jbcweski@aol.com](mailto:jbcweski@aol.com).

Photo, left, taken at the January 11, 2026 lunch at The Ketch. Left to right: Alison C, Chris B, Amy S, Kathleen, Erika M, Carol S, Michael S, Rev. Helen, and Chris Y.

## Traditions for Transitions – Join us!

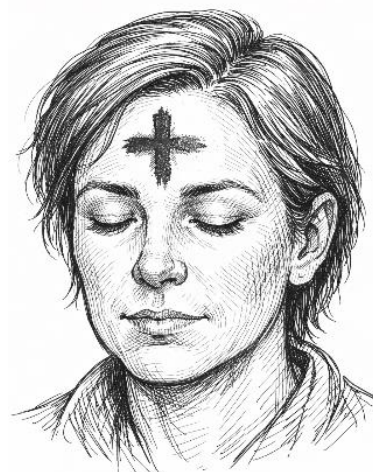


### Pancake Supper

February 17, 5:30 – 7:30 pm

The season of Epiphany ends Tuesday, February 17. It's our tradition to mark the transition from this season to the season of Lent with a feast of pancakes and fixings, the **Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper!** This event will be held in our Parish Hall. A few folks are needed to help with decorating, set-up, and cooking starting at 5:00 pm and cleaning up during and after the event. The feasting will begin at 5:30 pm and continue through 7:30 pm. This is a great event to which to invite friends and neighbors. Donations are appreciated; pay what you can to help offset costs.

The season of Lent begins with **Ash Wednesday**. Services are offered at Noon and 6:30 pm on February 18. The Ash Wednesday service is a contemplative one. In the Collect, we pray "Create and make in us new and contrite hearts." Ashes from last year's Palm Sunday palms are used to mark crosses on foreheads as we are called to remember that our divine spark, our aliveness, comes from God. During Lent we are invited to reexamine ourselves and to let go of those things which keep us disconnected from God and one another, whether that be past hurts, big egos, wrong behaviors, minimizing our abilities, or failing to consider others traveling with us on our earthly pilgrimage.



### Ash Wednesday

February 18, Noon & 6:30 pm



Give us the self-control that springs  
from abstinence in outward things;  
That from each stain and spot of sin,  
Our souls may keep the fast within.

–St. Gregory the Great, 540-604

Left: A winter storm led one of God's creatures to take refuge under the awning over Alison and Chris Clendenen's doorway. Faith, strength, and beauty are everywhere we look!

# A View from the Pew

The last time I was on sabbatical, in spring of 2019, we spent Easter in Lichfield Cathedral, the only medieval three-spired cathedral in England. Its beautiful architecture and amazing ornamentation were inspiring. The Easter processional included the bishop and community officials including the mayor of Lichfield. All were decked out, the mayor wearing the "Mayoral Robe and Chains." It was an amazing service to join.

At the other extreme of our experience was the parish church, St. James the Great, we attended regularly during spring of 2011 (our first trip). This 14<sup>th</sup> century building (with additions) was a beautiful, but less ornate, stone church only a block or so from our house. The small parish reminded me in many ways of St. Raphael, both in numbers and in its warm greeting of us. We went to Ash Wednesday service that year. I've often heard the words, "**Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return,**" but somehow hearing that as I knelt on an actual grave marker (near the altar) brought new poignance to it.

Easter at St. James was resplendent, although more modest than the Lichfield Cathedral. I especially remember Easter Vigil, as we lit the embers in the church yard, surrounded again by graves, and entered a dark and cold church. As we reached the Eucharist, the dim candlelight gave way to the full lights and our little choir (which Amy, Beth and I made up over a third), sang beautifully. The best part was that I got to ring the church bell using the long pull reaching high into the tower!

As we enter this Lenten season, I am planning my sabbatical for the next academic year, and I wonder where I will be next spring for Ash Wednesday and Easter. I do know that a part of my heart will be with you all at St. Raphael, and that we will return with new stories and new reflections.

–Chris Bollinger



*Save the Date!*

**APRIL 25, 2026**  
CATHEDRAL DOMAIN

**ST. GEORGE'S DAY**  
Celebration of the Ministry of  
Bishop Mark and Helen  
Van Koevering

Diocese of  
**LEXINGTON**

## SAVE THESE DATES!

**Happening**

**March 13-15**

Cathedral Domain

**Celebration of the Ministry of Bishop Mark and  
Helen Van Koevering**

**@ St. George's Day**

**April 25**

Cathedral Domain

**Episcopal Church Women (ECW) Women's Retreat**

**May 15-17**

Cathedral Domain

## Another View from the Low

It was when the Rev. Joan Smith was St. Raphael's interim rector, 2000-2001, that I told her I wanted to plant a Lenten rose by the red front door. I thought I needed permission. "I know this isn't what the church needs most now," I said, "but I think we ought to have a Lenten rose."

After a bitter period of dissension, St. Raphael's was at the lowest ebb it has ever been in my 40 years here. Attendance was low, and with it giving. The Church was so poor that the committee searching for a new rector asked us to donate phone cards to use for calling candidates. The diocese allowed us not to make a loan payment for a year. Planting something is, to a gardener, an act of hope and faith, that the plant will live and grow. For me, planting a Lenten rose was an act of faith: that the church would still be there for it to grow beside.

We know what happened. The church survived, recovered, prospered. And every February since, during Lent, the Lenten rose, *helleborus orientalis*, has bloomed. It's the one to the right of the sidewalk. A few years later another woman planted the one on the left, which also blooms in Lent.

The Lenten rose is not a rose. It isn't a showy plant with flashy colors. The flowers are pale, white with light green or purple marks. I think what makes it so welcome a sight is that it's the first bloom of late winter, before crocuses, snowdrops, well before daffodils, long before tulips and the flowering trees and shrubs, when I for one am feeling flower-deprived.

I first saw Lenten roses in the garden of the Washington National Cathedral, and immediately decided I wanted them. I bought two, one for the church and one for my yard, from a local flower shop. I don't think they grow from seed. They need no maintenance, no pruning, only the gardener should remove the old foliage after they start blooming so they look better. Cold weather doesn't hurt them. If it snows, after the snow melts, they will be fine.



I can't explain why they always bloom in Lent, which is a moveable season on the church calendar, beginning Feb. 18 this year, which is determined by the date of Easter, which depends on a lunar calendar. Mother Nature's order of when things bloom is fixed. Her ways are mysterious. There may be scientists who understand all this, but it wasn't taught in my college botany class.

—Rose Canon

Kind Maker of the world, O hear  
The fervent prayer, with many a tear  
Poured forth by all the penitent  
Who keep this holy fast of Lent!

—St. Gregory the Great, 540-604

## Calendar

February 17, 5:30 – 7:30 pm Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper

February 18, Noon and 6:30 pm Ash Wednesday Services

March 28: Bach Marathon

March 29: Palm Sunday, 8:30 and 11 am

March 30, March 31, April 1:

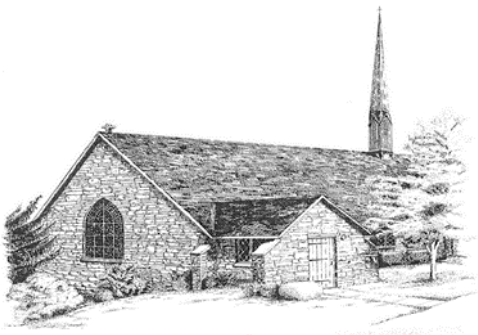
Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday of Holy Week: 12 noon Eucharist

April 2: Maundy Thursday & Stripping of the Altar, 6:30 pm

April 3: Good Friday Stations of the Cross, Noon; liturgy at 6:30 pm

April 4: Holy Saturday and 1<sup>st</sup> Eucharist of Easter, 6:30 pm

April 5: Easter family service at 11 am



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