



The Herald

St. Raphael the Archangel Episcopal Church

Vol. 61 No. 2 Easter 2026

From Our Rector

Holy Week & Easter

Palm Sunday 3/29 8:30 and 11 am

Monday of Holy Week 3/30, Noon

Tuesday of Holy Week 3/31, Noon

Wednesday of Holy Week 4/1: Noon

Maundy Thursday 4/2, 6:30 pm

Good Friday, 4/3 Stations of the Cross,
Noon Good Friday Liturgy, 6:30 pm

Easter Vigil, 4/4 6:30 pm

Easter Sunday 4/5 Potluck Brunch at
9:30 am, Festival Holy Eucharist, 11
am (One service)



Dear St Raphaelites!

Most of you have heard that I visited Amman, Jordan, for 3 days of meetings with the International Anglican Women's Network (IAWN) in early February. That was one week before our new grandchild was born in London – and three weeks before this current war broke out in the Middle East.



*Rev. Helen
Van Koevering*

In Amman, we had conversations with several Anglican church women that either worked in Gaza and or lived in the West Bank, or in Jordan for safety and stability. A six term Senator told us about the need to unlearn old beliefs and not assume what life is like at the grassroots without knowing their lived realities. Another spoke about being peace-makers to sustain hope in what seems a 'norm' of pain and make choices to align with justice and God's love. A mother spoke of the ongoing trauma for her and her children, the isolation and the challenge of life in a worldview that isn't offering gospel justice, peace, joy, hope. Together they showed us that community belonging is life-giving, crucial for all to feel safe and see the face of God in it all.

We had a few hours to visit both the Baptismal Site of Jesus on the Jordan River, and view the 'Promised Land' from Mt Nebo where Moses had stood. And I am grateful for that overarching story of faith, the journey of God's people thousands of years ago that continues today. In Holy Week, we join in that ancient journey

today and into our future. Just joining in with all believers globally is a sign of hope in the world. And an opportunity to again focus on gospel stories and listen for God's presence and voice today.

This year, I wondered whether joining in with the Episcopal Church Good Friday Offering would be a good expression of hope too. This Offering has been happening since 1922 when, after World War I, The Episcopal Church sought to create new relationships with and among the Christians of the Middle East, assisting relief

work and ecumenical and Anglican relations. It has been an effective way to express support for the three dioceses of the Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East. This year, they wish specifically to support the following Episcopal Church mission initiatives, all of which have been damaged by violence and war over the last year:

- al-Ahli Arab Hospital in Gaza, which has continued serving patients during the Israel-Hamas War amid bombardment, devastating shortages of food, water, and medicine, and extended power outages.
- St. George's Church in Baghdad, Iraq, and its medical center.
- An eye clinic at Christ Church in Yemen.
- All Saints' Episcopal Church in Damascus, Syria.
- All Saints' Episcopal Church in Beirut, Lebanon.

If you'd like to donate, please do give to the offering plate Monday-Friday of Holy Week, using the pew envelopes for cash and marking any checks as "Good Friday Offering". Thank you!

May this season of Easter (April 5 to Pentecost on May 24) be blessed with God's grace, love and peace!

–Rev Helen

A Musical Note

Let me be honest; I LOVE to sing, especially Easter hymns and anthems. As we sing communally, we fulfill a sacramental role in worship as we offer to God the gifts of our voices. We also preserve our heritage as we sing hymns and anthems that have sustained congregants for hundreds of years.



*Dr. Vicki Bell
Organist & Choir
Director*

The mission of any sacred music program is to enrich the life and worship of the church, rooted in a biblical mandate to sing. Both the Old and New Testaments contain references to song. David, the master musician of the Old Testament, urges us to "Sing praises to God, sing praises; Sing praises to our King, sing praises." (Psalm 47:6) In the New Testament, we are encouraged to "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." (Colossians 3:16)

Our Episcopal church has nurtured this mission for many years, and I can assure you that the St. Raphael choir and I are looking forward to Easter Sunday and the ensuing Easter season. We strive to sustain our Episcopal tradition, as we guide future generations to be able inheritors.

LET THE WORD OF CHRIST DWELL IN YOU RICHLY IN ALL WISDOM, TEACHING AND
ADMONISHING ONE ANOTHER IN PSALMS AND HYMNS AND SPIRITUAL SONGS,
SINGING WITH GRACE IN YOUR HEARTS TO THE LORD.

(COLOSSIANS 3:16)

A View from the Pew

I'm looking forward to Easter Sunday when we will sing some of my favorites like "Jesus Christ is Risen Today." I've been able to sing that one (it's apparently a good key for me), even belt it out with confidence. It doesn't hurt that we sing it nearly every Easter. But as many of you may know (but are polite enough not to bring up), I do struggle some with things like...key, pitch, rhythm...ok, who am kidding. Sometimes I'm a complete hot mess when I sing.

The last few weeks though, I think we've done some great singing (and I'm excited about some of the pieces we have for Holy Week and Easter Sunday!). Cory, the very tall young man with the spectacular voice who stands beside me and makes me sound good has brought out the best in me. (And a fair amount of credit to many others, including Vicki for helping me as well.) His presence, his voice, and his patient help have really helped me grow and find my own voice.

I think in many aspects of life we are like that. We try, our intentions are good (I really do want to hit the right note), but sometimes we just need someone to show us the right way. You're probably expecting me to write, Jesus is the Way and to follow Him. But for me it's always been the people of St. Raphael's. When I stumble, when I'm uncertain, when I need that guidance, you all are there. Whether it's Janis chiding me over email to "have faith" (she was right). Or Jonathon and JeanEllen whose love and support have helped carry me through some really tough times.

"The people of St. Raphael's are why I'm there every Sunday."

The people of St. Raphael's are why I'm there every Sunday. Our priests are and have been wonderful. But it's not about them. It's about us coming together to worship. To work together to do good in the world. And it's fitting that our choir is a great analogy of that. We sound better because we work together. Because we listen to each other. And because we support and encourage each other. Our parish is like that too. We work and help each other to do better. Our communion brings strength. Jesus is the Way. But we are the body of Christ together.

—Chris Bollinger

Caring for our Neighbors



Help local students learn to read

James Allen Elementary is inviting interested volunteers to read to and mentor students. Volunteers can donate a half-hour or more one day or several days a week. The children and staff will welcome any time or day(s) available. If interested, please contact Lelia Brannen at 859-338-1504. Lelia will be happy to coordinate a schedule with the school, or you may contact James Allen Elementary directly @ 859-422-3456 and ask for Dana.

Celebrating Rev. Helen & Bishop Mark

Rev. Helen and Bishop Mark are retiring at the end of May! Please add your presence and participation to as many of the following touchpoints as you can, so that we may let them know how much we have been blessed by their ministries among us and how much they will be missed.

Be part of the Diocesan-wide video

Please join us briefly after Easter services to record a short video with well wishes and short remembrances. These will be compiled with recordings from all Diocese of Lexington faith communities for the Bishop's and Rev. Helen's celebration of ministry event at the Domain (details below). See Alison with questions. If you wish to send wishes/congrats, but not be on video, see Alison. Thanks!

Photos needed for a commemorative photo album

If you have photos of church activities from Rev. Helen's time at St. Raphael's which would be suitable for an album, please send them in! Give physical prints (4 x 6) to Alison Clendenen at church. Email digital photos to sroffice@sreclx.org.

Celebration of the Ministry of Bishop Mark and Helen Van Koevering @ St. George's Day

Come spend a day (or the weekend!) at the [Cathedral Domain](#) for our annual St. George's Day celebration. This year's event on **April 25** features a special component: honoring **Bishop Mark and Helen Van Koevering** for their ministry.

The day starts at 8:30 am with Continental Breakfast. A service of Holy Eucharist will begin at 1:30 p.m. at the Cathedral of St. George the Martyr. A dessert reception will follow in honor of the Van Koeverings. (Interested in being confirmed at this event? Contact Rev. Helen.)

Throughout the weekend, we'll have hiking, music, games, and other activities like archery, rappelling, rock climbing, and fishing (weather permitting). We'll also have an auction to support the diocesan youth ministry. For those who want to come early and stay late, on Friday evening we'll gather to share stories and fellowship. On Sunday, we'll have Morning Prayer and Brunch. Register at <https://sreclx.org/st-george>

Farewell Luncheon for Rev. Helen

Sunday, May 31 after the 11 am service. This will be partially catered, so RSVPs are a must. Watch for the info to RSVP in emails and the Eminders. Help will be needed for set-up and clean-up, tending the food table, taking photos at the event, etc. Volunteer sign-ups will be available at church and in the Eminders. Please join in to make this an event to remember.

ST. GEORGE'S DAY

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



APRIL 25, 2026
CATHEDRAL DOMAIN

Schedule

- 8:30 a.m.: Continental breakfast
- 11:30 a.m.: Lunch
- 1:30 p.m.: Holy Eucharist with a special farewell for Bishop Mark & Helen
- Dessert reception to follow
- 6:30 p.m. Dinner

Another View from the Low

The Wine of the Tetrarh

This column is not about Easter. It's about something that happened after Easter. I didn't write the story. It's a short version of a story by the great Danish writer Karen Blixen, "The Wine of the Tetrarch," in a longer story, "The Deluge at Norderney," in her book, *Seven Gothic Tales*.

The scene is Jerusalem, the first Wednesday after the Resurrection. Peter is wandering about the streets, in a very disturbed state of mind, not knowing what to do with himself. A strange man approaches.

"Wast thou not also with Jesus of Nazareth?"

Peter says "Yes, yes, yes."

The stranger wants to talk to Peter. They go into an inn. He wants to ask Peter two questions. The first is, is it true that the Rabbi has risen from the dead. Peter says "Yes, it is true." And that he would rise again? "Nothing in the world is as true as that."

The stranger says to his friend "Phares was the repentant thief who died on the cross. Did he did go to Paradise?"

Peter says "Yes, he is sure to have gone there and he is there now."

The man tells Peter that he and Phares were robbers who stole a hogshead of wine being sent from the Emperor of Rome to Herod and hid it, but Phares was caught and imprisoned. He tried to rescue Phares by disguising himself as a beggar with a file hidden in bandages. He got into the prison, and they escaped out a window but were recaptured.

He says good wine is his greatest passion, but he has suddenly lost his taste for it. Wine no longer tastes good. His second question is, he has heard that "Rabbi" the night before he died gave his followers a special wine. Can he buy some of this wine?

Peter answers "You do not know what you are saying. This wine that we drank Thursday night, the Emperor of Rome could not pay for one drop of it."

They talk some more. Peter tries to give him helpful advice, but the man isn't taking it. As he is about to leave, Peter asks his name.

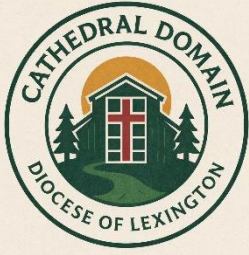
He answers:

"Did you not know my name? My name was cried all over town. My name is Barabbas. My name shall be remembered."

—*Rose Canon*



News from The Domain



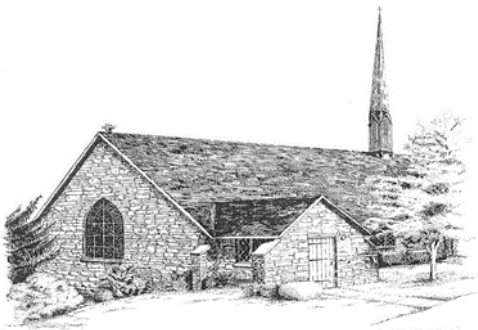
Summer Camp Registration is Open!

The Cathedral Domain is a place where people encounter God, build lifelong friendships, and experience the beauty of creation in the mountains of eastern Kentucky. Summer is just around the corner, and it's time to sign up for summer camp at the Domain! Registration is open at cathedraldomain.org.

Want to make a difference in the lives of young people? Apply now to be a camp counselor. Forms available at <https://www.cathedraldomain.org/untitled>.

2026 Summer Camp Dates

<u>Camp Session</u>	<u>Grade completed</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>Camp Session</u>	<u>Grade completed</u>	<u>Dates</u>
Senior High Conference	9 - 12	June 14 - 20	Adventure Camp	7 - 12	July 5 -11
Mini Camp 1	1 & 2	June 21 - 24	Boys Camp	3 -- 6	July 12 -18
Mini Camp 2	1 & 2	June 24 - 27	Co - Ed session A	3 - 6	July 19 - 25
Junior High Conference	7 & 8	June 28 - July 4	Co - Ed session B	3 - 6	July 26 - August 1
Girls Camp	3 -- 6	July 5 - 11			



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