



FORWARD *in* MISSION

A publication of the Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth

Pentecost 2020

Bishop Reed writes to the Diocese

Guidance for churches adjusting to COVID-19



Despite living in a time of pandemic, we are blessed. One hundred years ago, during the Spanish flu, churches were shut down for months on end. This has not been the case in our day.

I am so proud of – and impressed by – the clergy and wardens of this diocese. They have been innovative, positive, and bold in ministering in this age of pandemic. With the benefit of technology, most of our churches were able to continue worship, Bible studies, and other events in an online format. The clergy put a great deal of work into thinking through how we gather as Christians while at the same time limiting the risk of illness. Through Lent and Easter, this included online services and classes, drive-up Communion, and even outdoor worship services.

COVID-19 disease will remain in our communities. While we want to get back to “normal,” we must recognize that it will be a “new normal” for quite some time. We continue to follow advice from medical and public health sources

out of love for our neighbor and a desire not to have the Church become a source of risk or infection.

Moving into the summer months, I have updated my original pastoral directive, issued in late March, recognizing that each congregation is dealing with its own unique demographics and geographical realities. Individuals, too, should follow medical advice and take precautions fitting their own circumstances.

For the most part, in-person worship has returned, and I am again confirming new members during my visitations.

Please continue to pray for those impacted by this virus either physically or economically, and respond to their needs. Please pray for the health care workers and others who are ministering to so many at this time.

Page 2: Read about the May 22 ruling of the Texas state Supreme Court.

Page 6: Read some specific church guidelines for pandemic response.

Long-awaited good news

Supreme Court of Texas rules in favor of Diocese, Corporation

On May 22, the Supreme Court of Texas issued a unanimous decision in our favor concerning the suit first brought against the Diocese and Corporation more than 11 years ago. After considering our Petition for Review of the 2018 opinion issued by the Second Court of Appeals, the high Court granted all the relief requested.

Page two of the opinion says in part,

Applying neutral principles to the undisputed facts, we hold that 1) resolution of this property dispute does not require consideration of an ecclesiastical question, 2) under the governing documents, the withdrawing faction is the Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth, and 3) the trial court properly granted summary judgment in the withdrawing faction's favor. We therefore reverse the court of appeals' contrary judgment.

The Court found that the Diocese had not violated any Episcopal Church charter in withdrawing from association to TEC in 2008, and that the actions of the Diocese and Corporation were consistent with our own charters and with the state's trust and unincorporated association statutes.

Bishop Reed responded to this news with a call to the Diocese for a day of repentance and rededication on Pentecost Sunday, saying,

At this time of solemn rejoicing, we need to remember that the Church has never been the buildings or property. The Church is the Body of Christ: the followers of Jesus gathered together faithfully in Word and sacrament. and yet our Lord, in His Incarnation, came to us in physical matter. sacred spaces are important tools to help us worship our Lord and make disciples for Him.

We are called to stand firm (Eph. 6) and to hold fast to the faith once delivered to the saints (Jude 1). We are called to continue to proclaim the unchanging Gospel of Jesus Christ, who is the same, yesterday, today, and forever (Heb. 13).

In the end, the ruling makes no difference, if we are not willing to disciple the next generation by carrying out the work of the Great Commission. The challenge we face today, in an increasingly pagan and secular society, is to share the Good news of Jesus Christ in every way that we can. Today, we must leave behind the fortress mentality, look beyond the walls of our buildings, and be about the work of the Gospel. We need to shed the spiritual weight from this 11-year-long lawsuit and recommit ourselves to sharing the transforming love of Jesus Christ.

The TEC parties have indicated that they will exercise their rights of appeal, after which a mandate will go to the trial court for implementation.

Summer Camp 2020 Schedule

"Who's My Neighbor?"

July 5 - July 10	Sr. High	9th - 12th
July 12 - July 17	Jr Confetti	4th - 6th
July 19 - July 24	Jr High	6th - 8th
July 26 - July 31	Sr Confetti	6th - 12th

Many safety precautions will be taken during the camp season this year, says Executive Director Philip Craig. State guidelines for camps are being implemented, along with Bishop Reed's directives for diocesan gatherings. Look for these adjustments:

- Sessions begin Sunday afternoon and end on Friday afternoon each week, to allow extra time for cleaning before the next session.
- Camp staff will be in isolation at the camp for one week before the season begins.
- Cabin occupancy will be capped at 50% of capacity. Physical distancing will be practiced during all activities.
- Temperature checks and other screening begin at the gate; additional screening will take place at the nurse's station during registration. There will be daily follow-up screenings as well.
- Campers are asked to bring their own face coverings and personal bottle of hand sanitizer. The camp will provide additional sanitizer and many hand-washing stations. Hand washing will be done before and after activities and before meals. Face coverings will be utilized indoors; outdoor use is optional.
- Families will not attend the closing service. The service will be livestreamed two-and-a-half hours before pick-up time, allowing families time to travel to the camp for pick-up.

Praying for God's world

An invitation to participate

You've heard of an idea whose time has come? As 2020 began and the world was about to experience new hazards from physical closeness, God was preparing a way for ministry to continue. Or rather, He was renewing His eternal promises.

In a moment when travel is restricted and mission trips are on hold, the diocesan World Mission Committee is staying connected to brothers and sisters in Christ through prayer.

The Committee is offering a new monthly

newsletter to share prayer requests on behalf of our friends in Christ around the world. Gathered under three broad categories – Global Partners, the Persecuted Church, and Thanksgivings – the newsletter can help guide your prayer time for the Diocese of Northern Malawi, *La Gran Familia* in Mexico, the minority of Christians in Pakistan and Mandalay, and other locations where connections are being formed between our people here and God's people there.

To be put on the mailing list, write to wmc@fwepiscopal.org.

Around the Diocese

Seminarians begin parish ministry

Our two senior seminarians have now graduated from Nashotah House Seminary and are returning to the Diocese with their families. Beginning July 1, **Deacon Eddie Fitzhugh** will be the Diocesan Curate at St. Vincent's Cathedral, and **Deacon Matthew Rogers** will serve as Diocesan Curate at St. Laurence, Southlake.

Malawi anniversary ingathering

June 28 is GAFCON Sunday, a day for celebrating and supporting orthodox Anglicans worldwide. This year, recognizing the unmet financial needs of the Diocese of Northern Malawi and wishing to join in the celebration of **25 years since that diocese's founding** even when we cannot be with them, all congregations are encouraged to take up an offering in support of our companion diocese.



In this 2011 photo, Peggy Bruce greets Bishop Fanuel Magangani at DFW airport.

Clergy changes

Fr. Sam Wilgus, who came to the Diocese as curate for St. Andrew's, Fort Worth, in June 2018, has accepted a call to serve as rector of St. Francis, Willow Park. With his wife, Katy, and their children, Dottie and Jack, he is beginning his new ministry this summer.

Fr. Lee Stafki was ordained in March at St. Timothy's, Fort Worth, for the ACNA chaplaincy service. He operates Crossroads of Hope, a ministry to veterans in Denton, and has been assigned by Bishop Reed to serve as chaplain at the Bishop Davies Center in Hurst.

Youth formation weekends

A New Beginnings weekend for grades 7-9 is tentatively scheduled for Oct. 16-18; a Happening weekend for grades 10-12 is planned for Nov 20-22. Monthly student assembly and praise gatherings, open to all diocesan youth, will resume on Sunday, Aug. 9. Check anglicanyouthministries.com for details about getting involved in any of the youth program activities.

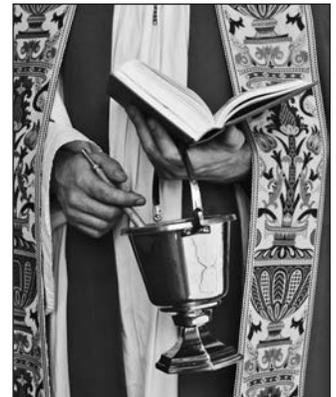
New form, timeless significance, in Rogation traditions

For centuries, the Christians have observed several days toward the end of the Easter season as Rogationtide – a time for outdoor processions and the blessing of local labor and enterprise, including fields and livestock. It is a time to ask God's blessing on human endeavors.

As Rogation days approached in 2020, with a pandemic causing social isolation and economic calamity, Fr. Brian Chase, rector of Church of the Good Shepherd in Wichita Falls, realized the need for God's blessing and reimagined an observance to fit the times.

"We are no longer an agricultural society, but a consumer-based society. We don't need to bless fields, we need to bless businesses," Fr. Chase told his flock.

On Monday, May 18, parishioners met at the church and formed a line of vehicles behind the processional cross, to travel downtown. As they went, Fr.



Around the Diocese



Chase prayed for local businesses, sprinkled holy water, and then dismissed his flock to buy their dinners from local restaurants.

“I think one way we can ensure the success of

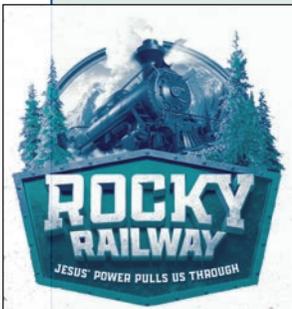


The Rogation procession along 10th Street to downtown Wichita Falls on May 18.

downtown at this time is to support local businesses,” he told a reporter for the *Wichita Falls Times Record News*.

Vacation Bible School goes online!

Due to the challenges of hosting children in church buildings for a traditional VBS while maintaining health and safety precautions, some parish organizers have decided to offer a virtual VBS in 2020, streaming program elements via YouTube links.



Online VBS has the advantage of flexibility: families may join in live or start the videos later on their own schedules. In addition, it opens VBS far beyond the usual attendance, so this is a great time to tell friends with children in preschool or elementary grades about the opportunity.

At St. Barnabas, Fort Worth, and St. Laurence, Southlake, the theme is “Rocky Railway.” The program is live at St.

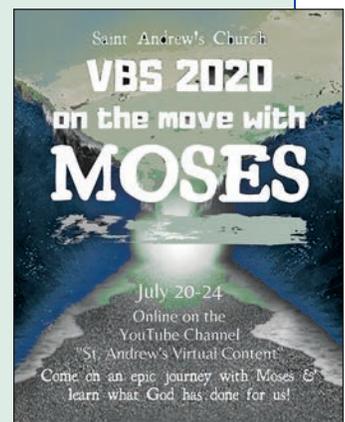
Barnabas June 15-17, but will remain on the parish YouTube channel this summer. St. Laurence’s VBS runs July 20-24.

“On the Move with Moses” is the VBS theme this summer at St. Andrew’s, Fort Worth, also July 20-24.

Signups are on each parish’s Web site:

- saintlaurencechurch.org
- stbarnabas.us
- st-andrew.com

Craft materials are available for pick-up from each church **while supplies last**. Phone ahead to be sure someone can assist you.



Updated COVID-19 guidelines for churches

Issued June 3

Sunday worship should continue to be offered online where available. A senior/at risk service is helpful. Continue to sanitize, practice social distancing, refrain from passing the plate, and encourage the use of masks.

Meetings, groups, and studies can be held in person using social distancing, sanitation, and encouragement of mask use. Please consider the space and the number of attendees when preparing. Make sure there is adequate ventilation.

Coffee hours can be held in person with social distancing. Outdoors is the safest environment. It is a good practice to have one person serve coffee and another place snack items (cookies, donuts, etc.) on plates or napkins so that handling is at a minimum. Wearing gloves for this task is safest.

Communion in one kind is still the safest way to receive the Sacrament. The chalice can be used at the discretion of the priest, taking overall safety into account. We all may choose to only receive in one kind. If intinction is desired, the priest is encouraged to handle the host, rather than the communicant.

Please employ these standards for special services such as baptism and marriage as well.

Instructions for conducting special rites and services

Bishop Reed offers these guides for adjustments and pastoral exceptions to rites of the Church.

- † Baptisms should continue while providing social distancing between candidates and their families, and between other candidates and their families. Clergy should sanitize their hands before and after touching anyone. Outdoor baptisms are encouraged.
- † For weddings, the couple is encouraged to have the wedding in a church if possible, with a limited number of witnesses present and an online viewing opportunity. During this pandemic, outdoor weddings are permitted only with my permission.
- † The Bishop is returning to doing confirmations this week. I will use a sanitizing towel between one confirmand and the next, and social distancing will be required between each household.
- † Confessions can be heard with accommodation for social distancing or some form of barrier between priest and person. Please sanitize the space and any books or forms used, before and after.
- † Funerals should be done as a graveside service when possible. If gathering in a funeral home, follow their rules. If using a church building, follow the previous pastoral directive guidelines.

REMEMBER TO

Keep up your pledge!

"Take, eat ..."

Feeding the hungry each Friday at San Miguel

by the Rev. Burton Shadow

"Take, eat." Usually, when we hear these words, we are immediately brought back to that sacred moment in the canon of the mass when our Lord and Savior instituted the sacrament of Holy Communion; lately, however, they are an invitation not from Christ's lips but those of his followers who are living out the ministry of Matthew 25:35-40, "for I was hungry and you gave me food... ."

This Matthew 25 ministry is being carried out at Mission San Miguel, at 3605 Fairfax Avenue, in a weekly offering to those on the southeast side of Fort Worth who are in need in these days of the coronavirus pandemic.



Tapping into a talent which is not only constant in evidence at Mission San Miguel, but is also intensely biblical, Canon

Sergio Díaz made the visionary connection between that God-given talent and the need of the surrounding community to be fed.

Good cooking is a constant at San Miguel. Whether one is partaking of Patricia's deer sausage burritos after Morning Prayer on Saturdays, Sergio's broiled tilapia on a Friday evening, Javier's menudo, or the men's group's hamburg-

ers (better than What-a-burger!); food is a part of every ministry.

On Friday mornings during this coronavirus pandemic, members of San Miguel gather at the church, use hand sanitizer, don masks and gloves, and start filling styrofoam take-out boxes with hot meals to go. The clamshell boxes are then tucked in plastic bags and distributed freely, to hungry neighbors who drive up to the semi-circular driveway and receive the gift and a blessing from Canon Diaz. Anywhere from 200 – 350 food trays are distributed each Friday between noon at 2 p.m. – or until the food runs out.



Every meal box comes with a message from the heart.

Editor's note: Other congregations helping to feed their communities at this time include St. Paul's, Gainesville, which hosts St. Martha's Kitchen each Friday; and San Juan Apostol, Fort Worth, which has begun distribution of food boxes on recent Saturdays. Blessed are those who feed the hungry!

Fr. Burton A. Shadow serves as assistant priest at San Miguel, Fort Worth.

DIOCESAN CALENDAR - PENTECOST 2020

Boldface type indicates Bishop Reed's visitations • Unless otherwise indicated, all meetings are held at the Diocesan Center

<i>January</i>	6/21	Discretion
<i>February</i>	6/28	ST. FRANCIS, Austin (Bishop Reed) ST. MICHAEL'S, Fort Worth (Bishop Ackerman)
<i>March</i>	7/3	Offices closed for Independence Day holiday
<i>April</i>	7/5-26	Bishop Reed's vacation
<i>May</i>	7/5-31	Summer Camp sessions, Camp Crucis
<i>June</i>	8/2	ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA, Alvarado
<i>July</i>	8/6	Ordination of Deacon Eddie Fitzhugh to the priesthood, St. Vincent's, Bedford
<i>August</i>	8/9	ST. GREGORY THE GREAT, Mansfield
<i>September</i>	8/11	10 a.m. Board of Trustees
<i>October</i>	8/15	Ordination of Deacon Matthew Rogers to the priesthood, St. Laurence, Southlake
<i>November</i>	8/16	ST. ANDREW'S, Breckenridge, and HOLY TRINITY, Eastland
<i>December</i>	8/17	9:30 a.m. Commission on Ministry
	8/18	1:30 p.m. Standing Committee
	8/23	GOOD SHEPHERD, Wichita Falls, & ST. JOHN THE DIVINE, Burkburnett
	8/30	Discretion

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The Rt. Rev. Ryan S. Reed, publisher; Suzanne Gill, editor (sgill@fwepiscopal.org)

Offices & mail The Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth, 2900 Alameda Street, Fort Worth, Texas 76108

Telephone 817.244.2885 fax 817.244.3363 www.fwepiscopal.org

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