



RECTOR'S LETTER

Dear friends,

Our Holy Week observance begins on Palm Sunday, as we recall our Lord's triumphant entrance into Jerusalem. As the week goes on, we will follow our Lord to the Upper Room, Calvary, and the Empty Tomb. The following preparatory reflections are taken from the "Guide to Holy Week," published on the website of the Church of Saint Mary Magdalene, Toronto. I hope that they will help you embrace this holy time of year:



Holy Week is best experienced in its fullness, day by day. We invite you to enter into the richness of this week of weeks, allowing the powerful liturgies to enter deeply into your body, mind and soul. During this week we follow Jesus "from the glory of the palms to the glory of the resurrection, by way of the dark road of suffering and death."

Palm Sunday is a day of sharp contrast. We begin the liturgy recalling Christ's triumphant entry into Jerusalem. With those who greeted him that day, we too wave our palms and shout "Hosanna in



**HOLY WEEK
& EASTER**

PALM SUNDAY
APRIL 2 | 9:00 & 10:30AM

MAUNDY THURSDAY
APRIL 6 | 6:30PM

GOOD FRIDAY
APRIL 7 | 12:00PM

HOLY SATURDAY
APRIL 8 | 8:00PM

EASTER DAY
APRIL 9 | 9:00 & 10:30AM

the highest." But then the mood shifts. We sing of Jesus the King "riding on in majesty to die." The story of Christ's passion, crucifixion and death is told, and we leave prepared to enter deeply into this holiest of weeks.

On Maundy Thursday, we recall Christ's two acts of the night before he died—the washing of his disciples' feet as an act of service and the institution of the Eucharist as a sign and symbol of the reality of his death and resurrection. At the end of the liturgy, the altar is stripped and the sacrament of Christ is placed at the Altar of Repose. We are invited, throughout the evening and night until the next day, to spend time with Christ in

the Garden of Gethsemane, as he watches and waits.

On Good Friday, we proclaim the passion of Christ's crucifixion and death. In solemn prayer we uphold the needs of our fallen world and then, in remembrance of his death, we receive communion, the sacrament that has been reserved at the Altar of Repose throughout the previous night.

The Great Vigil of Easter begins in total darkness. A new fire and the Paschal (Easter) Candle is lit. In the growing light we hear the great proclamation of Easter (the Exultet); celebrate the sacrament of Baptism and renew our baptismal vows; and then hail the first mass of Easter. There is no other liturgy of the Church's year that more fully expresses the mystery of our redemption through Christ's death and resurrection. (And, as if that were not enough, an abundant Resurrection Party follows).

Yours in Christ,
~Father Carlos†



FROM THE DEACON'S PERCH

“Lord have mercy on me, a sinner,” followed by “Let us go forth in the name of Christ, alleluia, alleluia.”

My dear friends,

As I write this, we are in the midst of Palm Sunday and the Triduum. From there we celebrate Easter with the risen Christ. These days bring sadness and joyfulness, but also heart-wrenching agony. We follow Jesus and the way of the cross on Good Friday (with which, as many of you know, I always struggle), then the burial, and finally the risen Christ. In order to fully experience these emotions and to truly appreciate this Easter season, I invite you to participate in all the services that St. John's has to offer.

I am keeping my message short, but as many of you know, I will be taking a sabbatical after April 16. Please join me at what will be my last mass for a while until I return in September—hopefully energized from a needed rest.

One of the great joys that I am experiencing from taking leave is the fact that so many people have come forward to assume the various ministries we have at St. John's. Fr. Carlos has done a great job in getting people on board with his meetings. I feel very confident and joyful, since one of my duties as a deacon is to encourage people to become involved with ministry, and that is now coming to fruition.

I will be having knee replacement surgery in late April, which will keep me laid up for a while. After that I will be spending much time in reading and relaxing. As we get older, it takes longer to do things. I'm trying to do that gracefully, so please keep me in your prayers as I will pray for all of you.

~Dcn. Alex+



THE VIGIL AT THE ALTAR OF REPOSE **Maundy Thursday, April 6, until dawn on Friday**



The Vigil at the Altar of Repose will happen this year, starting upon the conclusion of the Maundy Thursday liturgy (around 7:45 p.m) until the following sunrise. This ancient practice is inspired by Jesus' question to his disciples in the Garden of Gethsemene, "Could you not stay awake with me one hour?" If you are interested in spending an hour in prayer, please sign up for a slot: <https://bit.ly/3neTt8X>.



HELP THE ALTAR GUILD PREPARE FOR HOLY WEEK & EASTER

Saturday, April 8, at 9:30 a.m.



Each year our Altar Guild pulls out all the stops to prepare our church for Easter. On Saturday, April 8, beginning at 9:30 a.m., the Altar Guild will apply final touches for our Easter celebration. We will start with a brief prayer service for Holy Saturday; then we will decorate the church with flowers, adorn the Altar and rood screen with spring garlands, replace our unbleached candles with bright white candles, and prepare the fire for the Easter Vigil later that day. Please consider lending a hand!



DEACON ALEX'S CELEBRATION OF MINISTRY
Sunday, April 16, at 11:45 a.m.



This year Deacon Alex celebrates 16 years in Holy Orders. It also marks his transition from full-time active ministry into semi-retirement. Please join us after the 10:30 a.m. mass (roughly at 11:45 a.m.) on **April 16** for a luncheon reception in the Fellowship Hall hosted in honor of Deacon Alex's ministry at Saint John's. If you would like to contribute a side dish, please look for a sign-up sheet on Easter Day; the parish will provide sandwiches, beverages, and dessert.



OUTREACH GUILD PHASE II



Thank you to everyone who participated in our outreach conversations last month. Nearly a dozen people joined in and expressed their interest to take up the outreach mantle and enrich the great work that has been led by Deacon Alex. In May, we will have an outreach guild gathering to help distribute “jobs” to assist our efforts at the Food Bank, Out of the Cold, and the Bellefonte Youth Center for the summer and fall. Similarly, we will discuss new outreach efforts to support and connect parishioners who cannot join us on Sunday and to brainstorm some possible new strategic partnerships in our community. Please stay tuned for more information on our new nascent outreach guild!



A NEW-OLD FEAST DAY: ST. JOHN BEFORE THE LATIN GATE Sunday, May 7



Prior to changes in the Western Church calendar, May 6 was the Feast of the Martyrdom of St.

John before the Latin Gate. Towards the end of the first century, Roman Emperor Domitian tried to execute St. John at the Latin Gate by having him put into a cauldron of boiling oil. The tradition tells us that the Apostle, who was left unharmed, was then banished to the island of Patmos in Greece, where he wrote the Book of Revelation.

In the place of the attempted martyrdom, the Basilica of St. John at the Latin Gate (San Giovanni a Porta Latina) was erected. For centuries, this feast day has served as a secondary celebration in honor of St. John, our patron, with his principal feast taking place on December 27 – which guarantees that it will almost always go unobserved, even in parishes that bear his name. This year, and hopefully in years to come, we will reclaim and observe the feast of St. John

before the Latin Gate on the Sunday closest to May 6. This year that will be **Sunday, May 7**. Expect special liturgical and musical offerings, a very festive coffee hour, and more to help mark our old-new feast day.

**MOUNT NITTANY HOSPITAL
ER TRAUMA PATIENT CLOTHING ASSISTANCE**



Every day at Mount Nittany Health, nursing professionals go above and beyond for their patients. Jenn Traxler, an ER nurse at Mount Nittany Health, coordinates a clothing collection for trauma patients. We've been asked to help collect men's t-shirts, sweatpants, and sweatshirts (XL and up) for patients in need. Many thanks to Steve Dillon for coordinating this effort. You can place your donations in the cloth basket in the back of the church next to the Saint Lawrence altar.

**COFFEE HOUR VOLUNTEERS NEEDED
Sundays after the 10:30 a.m. Mass**



Please consider volunteering for coffee hour. Drinks and food items are all provided by the church. To sign up for a slot, please visit our sign-up link: <https://bit.ly/3um2fBp> or use the sign-up sheet on the lectern in the back of the church. Many thanks to everyone who's helped with coffee hour; thank you for supporting this vital ministry of fellowship and hospitality!



Saint John's will host the final in a series of poetry readings organized by local authors, including our own Julia Kasdorf. Save the date below as we open our doors to our neighbors. Readings will take place on Fridays in the Fellowship Hall, starting at 7:00 p.m.

April 14

Jerry Wemple, Bloomsburg, & Margie Maddox, Lock Haven

Pennsylvania poets and editors of two anthologies of poems about Pennsylvania read from their own work and discuss ways the Commonwealth is represented in contemporary poetry.



AROUND THE PARISH FAMILY TABLE



Liam Quigley has been swimming in post-season meets during the month of March. He started off by winning first place in both men's 50 free and 100 breast stroke at the District 6 AA



meet on March 3 and 4. He then went on to make the consolation rounds in both 50 free and 100 breast at the PIAA State Swimming Championship on March 15-16, where he finished 14th and 16th. In addition, he was awarded the Mountain



League Outstanding Male Swimmer for the 2022/2023 season. Finally, with his time at the District 6 meet, Liam qualified to swim 100 breast in the 2023 YMCA National Short Course Swimming Championships in Greensboro, NC, on Friday, April 7.

VESTRY NEWS

The vestry met via Zoom on March 15.

Rector's Report:

- Upcoming services:
 - Stations of the Cross continue
 - March 25 – Feast of the Annunciation
 - April 1: Family Day – longer version of Sunday School; Ellen and Fr. Carlos will present
 - April 2 – Palm Sunday
- Columbarium mailing has been sent
- Floor repairs start 3-27; do not expect interruption to services.
- We have been approached by the Bellefonte Historical and Cultural Association (BHCA) to request use of the Parish Hall.
 - Current board members want to retire and appoint a new board and will hold a meeting to discuss that transition.
 - Fr. Carlos has accepted their invitation to serve on the new board.
- Alex's retirement:
 - Required steps are in progress.
 - Need to submit formal request to Bishop to allow Alex to serve another year; document will be in church office for vestry signatures.
 - He will have knee surgery in late April and then will be on sabbatical for some time.
 - Alex's last Sunday: April 16 – receptions planned after both masses.
- Annual Parochial Report has been submitted.

- Required by national Church.
- Average Sunday attendance: 56. This is the same as pre-COVID; however, we are seeing new trends in attendance. Streaming viewers are not counted in the totals.

- Corned beef dinner March 18: expect to sell 150-180 dinners.

Financial:

- Income – pledges coming in well. Expect loose-plate offering to increase during warmer weather and extra Easter services.
- Fr. Carlos explained in detail each income line item for the benefit of new vestry members.
 - "Special St. John's" comes from extra services (Holy Week/ Easter, Christmas, etc.).
 - "Special outreach" is donated to Bellefonte Youth Center.
 - Endowments are ~\$600k.
- Miscellaneous income – includes \$5000 gift from a parishioner to cover 2023 budget shortfall. This will be combined with funds from Allspring account to pay for columbarium expansion.
- Floor repairs and bat remediation expenses will be covered from memorial fund.
- Gas usage was lower because we have a new heating system.

Senior Warden

- Will replace lightbulbs in the church to make them uniform.
- We received a new sound mixing board for use with our streaming

service (funds donated by a parishioner). This allows capabilities for more microphones and ability to turn on/off individual mics. It also affords possibility for expansion.



Thank you, Larry and Jeff, for your perilous service!

Junior Warden

- Received approval from PA1 to remove tree in front of church. Tree will be cut down and stump/root system ground. Expected to occur soon.



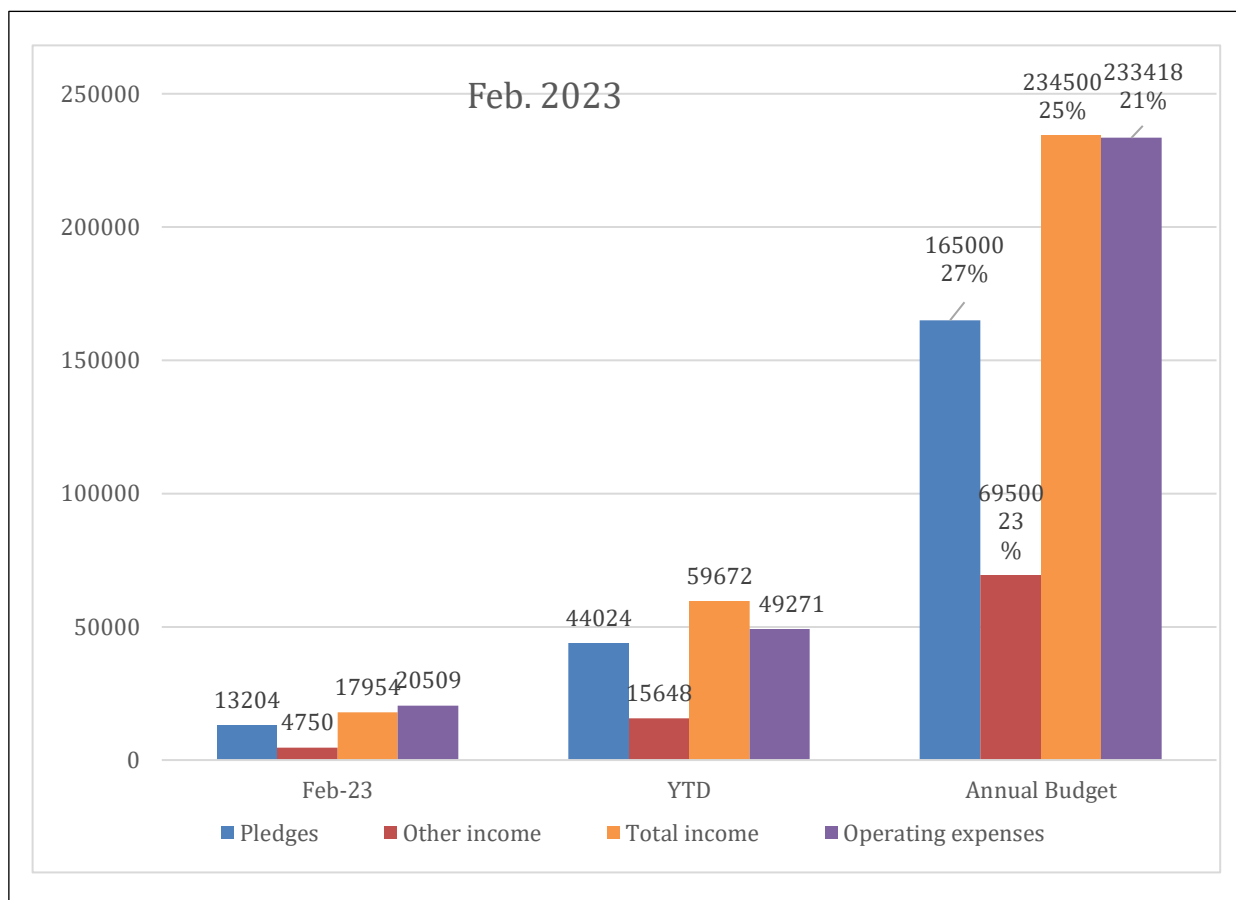
APRIL BIRTHDAYS

- | | |
|----------|------------------|
| April 4 | Sara Witmer |
| April 9 | Myrna Alterio |
| | Steve Dillon |
| | Mitchell Holland |
| April 20 | Susan Christy |
| April 23 | Finnegan Quigley |
| April 29 | Dan McGinley |

Financial:

	Feb-23	YTD	Annual Budget	YTD % of Budget
Pledges	13204	44024	165000	27%
Other income	4750	15648	69500	23%
Total income	17954	59672	234500	25%
Operating expenses	20509	49271	233418	21%
Net	-2555	10401		

Numbers do not include investments, savings, or checking acct. balance.



Vestry Members: Larry Roberson (Sr. Warden), Scott Mauger (Jr. Warden), Liz Helms, Carol Fyfe, Debra Cree, Alex Germano, Peggy Jackson, Thomas Quigley, David King, Charlotte Zmyslo