The Beacon

March 2026

A Lenten Pilgrimage

The 40 days of Lent are frequently referred to as a journey or pilgrimage, traveling with Jesus in the direction of Jerusalem and his passion (from the Latin pati- and passio, to suffer). Easter is the reward for that journey, and the Church makes it a 50-day season of celebration to emphasize the message of victory. The hard season of Lent, with its themes of abstinence from treats and extra prayer time, will be worth the effort!

I kickstarted my Lent with a short but difficult pilgrimage last weekend (Feb. 19-23) when I joined the Diocese of Michigan, to our south, on their now-annual Civil Rights Pilgrimage to Birmingham, Selma and Montgomery, AL. Places I never planned to go, knowing the violence that made those cities infamous in US history. And they need to be described honestly, not whitewashed, for the sins of bigotry, hatred and greed that still infect the human heart. But please, God, not like that, ever again. We have to learn, from childhood on up, the devastating results of slavery.

St. Jude's Episcopal Church

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OFFICE HOURS:
MONDAYS & THURSDAYS
9 AM - NOON

TUESDAYS & WEDNESDAYS
9 AM - 4 PM

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And there were lots of young people at the museums we visited. School trips and families, white and black, seeing the documentaries (some animated for kids), photos, maps and statistics carefully presented. A recreation of segregated classrooms (separate was NOT equal) and photos of ugly, screaming, white faces (parents and children) when that separation was legally ended. The church in Birmingham that was bombed in 1963, on Youth Sunday, killing four young girls who were still down in the ladies' room as a full church prepared for worship upstairs. Sculptures of Africans men, women and children, with iron shackles on their wrists and horrific devices around their necks.

It was an awful lot to experience (I use that phrase deliberately), especially in three days, and we pilgrims are still "processing." Prayers and reflection time framed each day, led by The Rev. Veronica Dunbar, "Sister Vee," who is the Canon for Spirituality and Race in that diocese. I hope our new diocese will include a similar position someday, because racism is a spiritual disease of failing to see all humanity as beloved children of God, made in God's image, deserving of equal respect, treatment, and opportunity. We are still a long way from that in our country and even in our churches.

continued on next page...

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March Birthdays

2nd Mary Louise Susalla
8th Carol Pettipher
14th Ella Koch
18th Rex Harris
23rd Gabriella Pennington
27th Rev. H. Wayne Knotts
31st Francine Rucker

March Anniversaries

6th Rex & Judi Harris (61st)
14th Bob & Terri Hutchins (62nd)
16th Liz & Sean Sailus (7th)

"A Lenten Pilgrimage" continued

White nationalism is the most blatant example of how far we still are from Jesus' teaching to love equally, but the readiness to assume the worst of people who don't look or sound like ourselves, runs deep. I grew up in Grosse Pointe, and I'll confess that learned bigotry still pops into my head sometimes. I will grapple with it for the rest of my life, especially after last weekend.

I really can't describe the power of those places and how they've been transformed into peaceful, even holy, sites of reckoning. Each American should encounter this history, so we can carve other channels for the future of our society to flow. Here are some ways you can begin such a pilgrimage, too. God bless your journey, and let's talk about it, along the way.

Still walking,

Susan+

- Read or watch "Just Mercy" (2019) by Bryan Stevenson, founder of the Equal Justice Initiative, which created the three incredible sites we visited in Montgomery; get started with his massively popular TED talk from 2012.
- Watch the documentary 13th (2016) about the transition from legal slavery to mass incarceration in the US, using a clause in the 13th Amendment to our Constitution. It is truly eye-opening.
- Watch episodes of "Eyes on the Prize," a series on PBS than ran from 1987-1990, and is considered the best set of documentaries. If you're a "PBS passport" subscriber (with a large enough donation) you can get to it; others can find episodes streaming on Max or Amazon Prime. Maybe your library has a set of DVDs?

Spring Break School Lunch Program

St. Jude's has been feeding students in the surrounding communities for over 19 years, and it all started with the first Spring Break School Lunch program in 2007. From the beginning our goal has been to provide groceries for kids on the free or reduced lunch program during times when school was not in session. Many things have changed since that first effort, but the need still exists and so the program continues. This year Spring Break will be the last week in March, so the food giveaway will happen on the preceding **Saturday, March 28th**.

The program takes many volunteers and work has already started. With the help of many people, we began stocking the pantry shelves in January. On February 22nd signup sheets were posted in Vandenberg Hall. In total it will take 20 – 30 people to make the program work. Jobs include;

- packing and delivery during the week of March 232rd for those students that participate in the backpack food program
- Friday evening setup
- guest sign-in for both Saturday morning and Saturday afternoon
- helpers to fill and carry groceries on Saturday morning and Saturday afternoon
- volunteers to replenish the "shelves" on Saturday morning and Saturday afternoon
- drivers to deliver groceries to those who don't have transportation
- volunteers to help clean up on Saturday afternoon

This program is now well known in the community, especially within the Fenton, Lake Fenton and Linden School Systems. In some years we have had as many as 450 students participate, and in other years only 100, we never really know in advance. What we know for certain is that every student we serve will have a better spring break because of it. Please look for the sign-up sheets in Vandenberg Hall.

Above is a photo of our dear friend Jack. He and Bev were always big supporters of the School Lunch Program.

Upcoming Events

Saturday, 3/7
9 am - Noon: Basic Needs Pantry

Monday, 3/9
6 pm: Book Club @ Church
Horse by Geraldine Brooks

Wednesday, 3/11
1 pm: Outreach Meeting

Saturday, 3/14
11 am: Celebration of Life of Marcia Freeman

Tuesday, 3/17
1 pm: Prayer Shawl Ministry

Wednesday, 3/18
7 pm: Vestry Meeting

Saturday, 3/28
Spring Break School Lunch

Every Sunday
9:30 am: Adult Formation
10:30 am: Holy Eucharist

Every Wednesday
6 pm: Choir Rehearsal

Every Thursday in Lent
5:45 pm: Simple Soup Supper & Lesson with First Presbyterian in Van. Hall

Craft Show - Crafters & Hobbyists Needed

We are already hard at work planning our 6th Annual Craft Show & Holiday Bazaar.This year we are planning to host it a little earlier **(Friday, October 9 & Saturday, October 10)**.

As always, **we need your help finding crafters** to fill our building with their wonderful hand-made items. If you happen to be going to a craft or art show elsewhere during the year, please consider taking along some of our flyers to give to crafters who might be interested in renting booth space from us. The flyers are located outside of the church office on the small table.

New this year, we would like to host a church fundraiser table but, rather than sell gift jars, we are hoping to fill the table with **unique, handmade treasures donated by talented individuals**. If you or someone you know makes quality craft items, whether they are a master crafter or a weekend hobbyist, please let Liz Sailus know. We would love to have individuals donate one or two items to the table with proceeds from sales going toward the building and grounds fund. Look for more opportunities to help as autumn gets closer. We look forward to hosting another successful event this year!

Craft Show & Holiday Bazaar Committee

Thursdays: Come @ 5:45 pm

In one of those ecumenical snafus, the Presbyterians showed up at last year's time of 5:30 and the Episcopalians at my advertised 6:00, on our first Thursday together. We decided to split the difference. SOUP AT 5:45! Program from 6:30-8:00, on all the Thursdays in March. We are watching and discussing the fifth season of "The Chosen." If you want to catch up, find out how, here. We're watching it on Amazon Prime, but it's elsewhere too.

-Susan+

March 5: Season 5, Episode 4
March 12: Episode 5
March 19: Episode 6
March 26: Episodes 7 & 8
(will run late for people who want to stay for both).

Lenten Outreach Project

This year the Outreach Committee decided to support the ongoing Well Project at St. Dunstan's Episcopal Church in Davison, instead of using the Lenten coin folders we have used in the past. St. Dunstan's has already completed one well in Kenya, and are working to raise money for well number 2.

Women and young girls have been walking miles each day to collect water from a stream to use for cooking, drinking, and bathing. The well water is cleaner, is located right in the village, and also allows the young girls to attend school instead of collecting water.

Donations can be made in the offering plate or in the wishing well on the coffee hour table. If you write a check to St. Jude's, please note "Well" on the memo line. Donations can also be online by using the QR Code found in weekly bulletins, in weekly Cyber Beacons, and on the sign by the wishing well. Donations can be made throughout Lent, ending on Easter Sunday.

Please contact any member of the Outreach Committee with questions.

Faithfully,

Judy Marinco

Deacon

Episcopal Relief & Development Offers Lenten Meditations by Sister Monica Clare

Press Release - January 6, 2025

Beginning on Ash Wednesday and continuing throughout the 2026 season, Episcopal Relief & Development is offering daily Lenten Meditations in English and Spanish, inviting readers to reflect upon and deepen their spiritual practices.

This year, the organization has partnered with Sister Monica Clare—Episcopal nun, bestselling author and unlikely TikTok star —to create meditations that explore the theme of "Holy Habits." In her meditations, Sister Monica Clare reflects on the Scripture readings for Vespers (Evening Prayer) to encourage habits that support and strengthen a life of faith.

"To maintain clarity in a world of constant change, we need to attend to our spiritual lives each day," said the Most Rev. Sean W. Rowe, presiding bishop of The Episcopal Church. "Most often, spiritual growth happens not in grand moments, but through modest and consistent practices of faith. This Lent, Episcopal Relief & Development's meditations help us build 'holy habits' to deepen our relationship with the Risen Christ. By embracing these habits, we can become more equipped to slough off what no longer serves us and draw closer to God and our neighbors."

Episcopal Relief & Development invites everyone from the Episcopal community and beyond to participate in "Holy Habits" by subscribing to daily emails, downloading resources for further study and including the meditations in community prayer, worship and gathering time.

"Episcopal Relief & Development's Lenten Meditations are an invitation to join a movement of prayer and reflection," said Sean McConnell, Senior Director, Faith and Community Engagement, Episcopal Relief & Development. "People join this community of spiritual pilgrims from around the world, and many share these meditations with their own networks, friends and family. Lenten Meditations are a gift to our friends and supporters who give us so much of their own prayerful support."

Explore our 2026 Lenten offering, available in English and Spanish.
Disponible en Español.

For over 80 years, Episcopal Relief & Development has worked with an extensive network of faith and community partners to advance lasting change in communities affected by injustice, poverty, disaster and climate change. Inspired by our faith, we reach over three million people each year by focusing on four interconnected priorities: nurturing the potential of caregivers and young children, reducing violence against women and girls, strengthening communities' resilience to climate change and facilitating humanitarian response to disasters. Together with our partners, we leverage what's working well to drive impact, learning and sustainability. Together, we create lasting change. Join us: episcopalrelief.org.

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VESTRY

2027
Doug Hill
Dave James

2028
Charles Johnston
Sue Premo
Megan Rosa-Norred

2029
Mark Jagos
Diane Putnam
Denise Rayner
Dolores Ruby

Delegates to the Diocesan Convention
Mark Jagos, Charles Johnston
Alternates: Katie Young, Amy Freeman