



# Mary Magdalene Church

Mary Magdalene Church is an inclusive church in the Catholic tradition, where people from all faiths and backgrounds are welcome to the Lord's Table. We strive to live the values that Jesus taught, to honor and respect each individual and to share the joy of God's unconditional love, in our community and beyond.

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## Mary Magdalene Church Bulletin Sunday, March 22, 2020

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### Sacred Times like the Sabbath

...Do not reach out your hands.  
Reach out your heart.  
Reach out your words.  
Reach out all the tendrils  
of compassion that move, invisibly,  
where we cannot touch...

—Lynn Ungar 3/11/20  
Image Source: Arte Carde

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March 22, 2020

Greetings!

It sounds so cliché but it has never been more true for the whole world than now: What a difference a week makes! This is a time like nothing we have ever experienced before and if nothing more, perhaps this time can draw us together as a people of God, from different walks of life, very different cultures, experiences, religions, language, skin color, etc. In a time when it feels like our choices are so limited right now- what we can choose is how we respond to this time. And while that might not sound like much of a choice- it is in fact a very important choice. We can choose to become bitter, stingy, hoard toilet paper and focus on our own needs, or we can find ways to reach out, make connections through the phone, waving to your neighbor across the driveway to see if they need anything, share what we have, writing a note to a friend who is especially lonely right now, and spending some quality time with those under our roof!!

It's also important to find sources of inspiration. I know in dark times there are various authors, speakers, theologians & poets whose wisdom I draw from. This week Rev Nadia Bolz-Weber spoke about love in the face of fear! Right now there is no escaping the fact that we are anxious and we are fearful. With

the changing demographics we are facing uncertainty on every horizon (from health, friends and family, to financial concerns and global well-being). We long for safety right now and we hear people say to have faith in God. Nadia points out that perhaps the opposite of fear is not necessarily faith alone, as faith does not bring us safety, even if we have the deepest of faith, danger still exists in our world. And maybe it's not bravery either, maybe the opposite of fear is love. She tells us that "danger is not optional, but fear is." As I reflected on her words I realized how paralyzing fear can be, and I wondered how love is the opposite. At first I was focusing on love as a feeling, as an emotion, but then I began to think about love as an action. When I'm loving towards those I encounter, when I focus outside of myself on how I want to respond at this point and time in our world, it pulls me out of my fear. It's not so much about love as a feeling, as it is about LOVING in our actions.

Fr. Richard Rohr, this week called us to focus on solidarity which is exactly that- it's a way of loving in action! In his words: "we are in the midst of a highly teachable moment. There's no doubt that this period will be referred to for the rest of our lifetimes. **We have a chance to go deep, and to go broad. Globally, we're in this together.** Depth is being forced on us by great suffering, which as I like to say, always leads to great love...we have to allow these feelings, and invite God's presence to hold and sustain us in a time of collective prayer and lament." Collective prayer and lament! We're in this together and unless we see ourselves in that way we increase our isolation, loneliness and fear.

So how can we be together in this time of social distancing? One way we can be together, every Sunday morning, in one format or another is through a virtual time of prayer and liturgy. One way or another, (at times I might be live from my kitchen table,) but you can know that I will be with you every Sunday morning, so keep 10:00 on your Sunday calendar. This Sunday morning our liturgy will be live streamed. There are two formats you can join us through. If you're a Facebook member you can view us on our Mary Magdalene Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/MaryMagdaleneChurch/> From there you will be able to comment as well and you will see each other's comments, so feel free to offer prayer for one another and I think you can send us some love through the emoji's!! But if you are not on Facebook- no worries. You will be able to view us on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PVUcUa0uen8> No doubt there will be some bumps in this first attempt!! Be patient with us and I know we'll figure this out!

In preparation for gathering tomorrow, we've spent a great deal of time reflecting on this theologically, spiritually and prayerfully, as well as staying abreast of CDC guidelines and directives from the State. I say **WE** as I've been meeting virtually with the Ministry Team and Trustees, as well as talking with other ECC pastors. This is a time unlike any other and we've really needed to focus on ritual, tradition, and sacrament, as well as the role of community gathered in one place, versus community gathered from our separate homes. And we've also had to think about the precautions due to the virus itself. Let's face it practicing social distance and the concern for spread impacts everything we do right now. But, one thing we all agree- when we are together in prayer the Holy Spirit brings us together across the miles.

We are a Eucharistic people and the Sacrament of Eucharist is very important to our souls. And yet in these times, we are unable to celebrate Eucharist in the way that speaks to our hearts. So how do we celebrate in a meaningful

way, remembering that Last Supper that Jesus shared with his loved ones. Following the direction of Bishop Francis Krebs, the Presiding Bishop of our Ecumenical Catholic Communion, as well as the prayerful ways we have been asking the Holy Spirit to guide us through this process, we will ask God who is the source of all blessings, to bless a bit of bread and wine, or crackers and grapes, or whatever you may have. As Bishop Frank said **"we may ask the Holy Spirit to bless these elements so that we may experience our life and unity in Christ. If indeed we experience hope and love and faith, we will have a sign that God is truly present (for these "theological virtues" cannot be present without God being present) and that we are truly united in them. We are missing the most basic actions of actually physically gathering as the Body of Christ, of breaking and sharing the bread and sharing the cup, etc. There is a lot that is missing. But we are doing our best to be faithful to God in a difficult time and to draw sustenance from God's gifting hand. It won't be the Eucharist in the way that we would prefer, but it could be a rich time of faith "together," and certainly a way to encourage each other, and more importantly to receive God's encouragement, in our socially distanced lives."** I see it as sharing what the disciples called an "Agape Meal." In the early church they each brought something to share, like a potluck and they shared a whole meal together when they gathered, not just bread and wine. It will not replace the longing in our hearts for that Sacramental consecration of Eucharist that we celebrate in the sanctuary that we love, surrounded by our Mary Magdalene Family for sure. But while this is not Sacrament with a Capital "S", I believe that there are many ways that we celebrate sacrament with a small "s" by sharing God's love with others in our daily lives. While recognizing that this Sunday and subsequent weeks are different from what we are used to, I took comfort in Bishop Frank's closing line. **"Let's not underappreciate what we are doing, i.e., sharing our life in the living God who sustains us in all circumstances."**

So in preparation for tomorrow morning, light a candle, gather just a bit of bread, crackers, cheese, grapes or wine whatever you may have on hand. And have your laptop or mobile phone ready to connect over the internet. If you have any particular prayers you'd like us to consider for the Prayers of the Faithful please send me an email before 8:00 tomorrow morning to [revdenised@gmail.com](mailto:revdenised@gmail.com) (Please put "prayers of the faithful" in the subject line and if you miss that deadline know that I will still carry those prayers in my heart this week.) May we feel the unity of being connected through the Holy Spirit, praying with one mind and one heart!!

We will be finding ways to gather during the week for prayer, reflection and just to say "hi." Watch for email updates on opportunities to get together virtually. Members of our Ministry Team and our Trustees are going to be setting up opportunities during the week to have a **"virtual coffee hours."** Grab your cup of coffee and connect. These gatherings are also opportunities to figure out some of the quirks of a program that will allow you to "be seen and to see others." There will also be opportunities for prayer, etc

Another way to connect is via the Website!![www.marymagdalenechurch.org](http://www.marymagdalenechurch.org) Our new website is now up and running and Emma Milligan will be continuing to work on getting it as up to date as possible. On it you will find a few homilies and bulletins, she'll be continuing to add these in the next several days. There will also be updates on what is happening. The calendar will be one way to find out when our virtual gatherings will be happening during the week! Please note

that right now the calendar has not been changed since COVID-19 happened, but it will be updated soon. THANK YOU EMMA!!!

In addition to opportunities to meet through virtual gatherings that are planned through Mary Magdalene Church, we want to make sure you know how to connect with each other. Below you will find some information about being a part of our parish contact list. Scroll down until you see the heading **Contact Info to Connect With Other Parishioners**. There you will find info on being added to our contact list. Please note- this list is different from the bulletin list that all of you who are receiving this update already receive. This will be specifically to be able to reach out to one another. See the details below. As we are trying to get this list as up to date as possible before distributing it the deadline to be included in this particular directory is **Monday 3/22/20**. After that you will still be able to add yourself to the list and whenever we update it again you will be there.

Be well and remember, if there's anything we can do, or if you'd just like to connect, you can reach out to Mimi or myself via email, phone, text, Facetime or Google Duo. For me: [revdenised@gmail.com](mailto:revdenised@gmail.com) or 585-329-0895 or for Mimi [marymagdalenechurcher@gmail.com](mailto:marymagdalenechurcher@gmail.com) of 585-797-4707.

Please see the note below from our trustees.

With Much Love

**Bishop Denise**

**Note from Our Board:**

Friends, we want to thank you for your thoughtful and generous love, support and donations through the years! We have been asked by a few people how they might be able to support Mary Magdalene Church during this challenging time, especially while we are not celebrating Mass at the church. So, in light of this, we have set up a donation button through our bulletin for those who would like to donate. We so understand these are difficult times for so many, please see this as an option for those who choose.

We also know that in these difficult financial times some of you may need to change your donation. If so, we completely understand. If your donation was set up through Mary Magdalene Church's automated process, please email our treasurer, Sue Pagano and she will be happy to make any adjustments that are needed: [suepagano@gmail.com](mailto:suepagano@gmail.com) Finally, you can also contact Sue if you'd prefer to work with her to set up a new automatic deduction.

Please know that we are here for you. Rev Denise and Mimi encourage you to reach out to them and to each other if you are struggling, feeling lonely, or need to know you're not alone. Their contact information is above. We are in this together and we need each other now more than ever!

Most of all dear friends, please let us pray for each other and the health and safety of our world.

Many blessings,

*Odysseus Adamides, Regine Calvar, Chris O'Brien, Sue Pagano, Bill Smith, Binnie Thompson, Jim Kerg (alternate), Pat Moriarty (Parish Moderator)*

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### **Contact Info for Parishioners:**

We want to provide ways to make sure that every member of our community is able to be connected with other members via emails, phone calls, texts, etc. To facilitate that we need to get parishioner contact information into the hands of our parishioners.

Some of you (approximately 90 people/families) have already completed a membership packet, (or already added your name through the survey link below) and we therefore have your names, addresses, phone numbers and email addresses. When you completed this packet, you also checked a box giving us permission to share your contact information with other community members. However, for the vast majority of you, we only have your email address to send you the bulletins, and we do not have permission to share that with other community members.

If you'd like to be on this contact list that is shared with other parishioners, please complete this survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LKWFCBS>

By completing the survey you would give us permission to share your contact information with parishioners, and in turn you would receive their information. Please note- this would only be shared with the **others who are on this list**, currently just over 100 people. It would not go to all 350 people who receive our bulletins. It would also not be available for others to access on the internet somehow!!!

In addition, after completing the survey, we will mail you a new parishioner's membership packet. The membership packet would include an actual membership form, a time and talent sheet that will allow opportunities to become more involved, and information about stewardship. If you're interested in completing this, we will add you to our parishioner database as a member of Mary Magdalene Church.

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### **Do you have someone you want us to pray for?**

To add someone to the prayer chain contact:  
Christine Kaiser [cmkaiser@rochester.rr.com](mailto:cmkaiser@rochester.rr.com)  
Or Joann Corso at 223-5682

If you'd like to connect with Rev Denise directly:  
[revdenised@gmail.com](mailto:revdenised@gmail.com)  
Or 585-329-0895

If you'd like to join our team of "prayers"  
and be notified where there are some prayer needs,  
please send an email to Christine Kaiser:  
[cmkaiser@rochester.rr.com](mailto:cmkaiser@rochester.rr.com)





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