

May 30, 2021

St. Thomas's Episcopal Parish  
276 S. College Ave Newark, DE  
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weekly newsletter

# The Carpenter's Helper

*This Week...we hear the song of the cicada*



## Drive Through/Walk Up Communion and Prayers

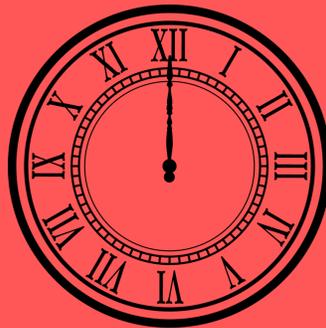
continues every Sunday  
10-11am

**ALL are Welcome!**

## Summer Worship Schedule (June, July, August)

**Wednesday**, 12 noon  
Intercessory Prayer

**Thursday**, 7 pm  
Evening Compline



**Sunday**

8 am, Rite 1 spoken  
9:30 am, Rite 2 with music



Thank you for wearing a mask in the church building.  
It protects those who are worshiping, and communing.  
Your mask protects the clergy, staff, faith family members, and community.  
Let's keep our church building safe, healthy, open, and a respectful place for all.

### **During the COVID-19 pandemic, St. Thomas's is alive and well.**

We are worshiping via live streaming on YouTube (See our YouTube Channel and hit Subscribe!). The full-text bulletins for our services can be found on our website, and by email request.

We also continue to respond to the needs of the Newark community through our collaboration with the Newark Empowerment Center and others. Those who would like to support our work may do so by going to our "Giving to St Thomas's" page.

Our prayers are with all those who are ill, all who are caring for them, and all who are striving to hear the voice of God in these challenging times. May God bless you and keep you, now and always. For more, see the Episcopal Diocese of Delaware COVID-19 site.



It started about a two weeks ago, with just a few mysterious holes around the trees and fences of the Grove. Now, everyday the number of cicadas emerging increases. Their shells are piling up. And, even if you don't get close enough to see the signs of the cicadas, the noise is inescapable. In this region, cicadas are an annual occurrence, but this year brings Brood X: the largest group of cicadas who emerge every 17 years. So, what we casually notice each year has been multiplied many times over, and the call of the male cicadas will reach rock concert levels in our Grove.

They are not the cutest creatures in my opinion, with their buggy red eyes and scratchy claws, and the loud whirring noise can be unnerving. While it can be tempting to use pesticides on these "invaders", there's no need, and doing so can damage our ecosystem. Treating yards to kill cicadas is an unnecessary spread of pesticides into the environment and poisoning these insects directly may also sicken animals who then try to eat them. Cicadas are mostly beneficial. They prune mature trees, aerate the soil, and once they die, their bodies serve as an important source of nitrogen for growing trees. When cicadas come out, they're eaten by just about anything with an insectivorous diet. The birds and squirrels are happy for this feast, and there are many regions where cicadas are a human delicacy. University of Maryland entomologist Mike Raupp tells: "They have a buttery texture, a delicious, nutty flavor, probably from the tannins, from the roots of the trees on which they fed, and they're going to be really good with a Merlot."

I am probably not going to try eating them this year, but I do want to try and take a lesson. As the cicadas emerge from their underground isolation, so too are we beginning to emerge from over a year of pandemic quarantine and social distancing. So, drawing this parallel, what can we learn from these insects?

- **Work beneath the surface.** Cicadas spend the majority of their lives out of sight, quietly aerating the soil. We can be reminded that while much of the work that we have been doing in isolation over the past year may have been unseen, and quiet, the positive impact you may have had on your environment could be significant. Looking at the gigantic trees in the Grove, it's so cool to think about how these tiny insects play a big part in the healthy growth of their roots.
- **Get out when it's warm.** The brood only emerges when the soil reaches 64 degrees F. For those of us who have been hidden inside, perhaps buried in our computer screens, the cicadas remind us to get up and out, especially when it is warm outside! Sunlight is essential for human health and well-being. The health benefits of sunlight include generating the production of vitamin D, supporting bone health, lowering blood pressure, preventing disease, and promoting good mental health.
- **Come out of your shell.** Once out in the open, the cicadas molt, leaving the shell that once provided protection behind. For people who may be struggling to move forward, and who have grown attached to their past protective shell, the cicadas offer inspiration. Emerging from what is "safe" and "comfortable" can be scary under any circumstance. This feeling can be overwhelming, given the seriousness of the pandemic. Let the cicadas inspire us: it is only when the shells are gone that they can fly.
- **When necessary, make some noise!** These bugs don't spend the majority of their 17-year lives hollering, but when the time comes when it is essential to the survival of the species, when it is time to spread love, they let loose. If we all went around shouting about everything all the time, the cacophony would drown out anything of importance. However, when something is imperative to the well being of you or your neighbors, don't hold back. And, take another prompt from these bugs: rise together. You don't have to do it alone. You are a part of our St Thomas parish family and a beloved member of Christ's family, and we are here to love and support each other.

If the cicadas still freak you out, remember, they'll be gone in a matter of weeks. They are God's creatures and they have a purpose – they replenish the earth, and come again, to be seen and heard, and maybe to even give us some lessons.