

Time was ticking – I was planning to make a chicken and sausage gumbo and traditional andouille sausage was nowhere to be found in Richmond. I had forty people coming to my house for a fellowship dinner in six hours and I couldn't find it anywhere. What to do?

Well, when the gumbo ingredients come up short - make Paella. Honestly, it wasn't that hard a switch. Paella and Gumbo use a lot of the same ingredients. Instead of the Holy Trinity of celery, onion and bell pepper – you make a “sofrito” with onions, garlic and tomatoes. (I threw in the bell pepper for good measure) Both call for chicken thighs. There is no roux, but you do need the broth. With a paella, rice does the heavy lifting, and I always have lots of different kinds of rice in my pantry. Finally, a use for the tiny bit of saffron languishing in my spice drawer! The only ingredient I had to buy was chorizo and while the Libbie Market was out of andouille – chorizo sausage was in stock!

Sometimes things don't go as planned. Plan A becomes Plan B and sometimes C.

We all do our best to participate in worship. The Grace parish family is consistent in attendance for both Sunday services and the Wednesday Healing Service. We come for sustenance and fellowship; we participate to be part of the Grace family. But sometimes life gets in the way and sometimes illness strikes. But just because you cannot get to church doesn't mean you aren't still part of church.

“Communion under Special Circumstances” is intended for persons who for “reasonable cause” are unable to participate in the public celebration of the Holy Eucharist. The liturgy is in our Book of Common Prayer starting on page 396 and it is intended to be used! As we've been exploring Pastoral Care in your Grace parish family, we have gathered your licensed Eucharistic Visitors, made sure that they have the training and tools needed for their ministry and prepared them to take Communion those who are unable to come to us.

One of the most important ingredients in Pastoral Care is you! If you are sick or in need, please keep your clergy and pastoral care givers informed. Not only will we know to keep you and your family in prayer, but we will also know how best to respond pastorally to your needs. Your Eucharistic Visitors are joined by other Pastoral Care givers; visitors, cooks, card writers and more.

It might not be gumbo, but paella is its own kind of good.