

HOLY TRINITY EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

It feels like just yesterday that I was writing to you with updates regarding our parish response to the Coronavirus/Covid-19 pandemic... In that regard, I have further news.

The Diocese has decided to cancel all public worship for the remainder of the month in the hopes that the outbreak will subside as we near Holy Week. This closure will include our Tuesday evening Eucharists and our Soup Suppers. The Bishop's letter to this effect may be found

here: [https://s3.amazonaws.com/dfc_attachments/public/documents/3274866/Suspending_Worship_1 .pdf](https://s3.amazonaws.com/dfc_attachments/public/documents/3274866/Suspending_Worship_1.pdf).

In order to provide for our ongoing life of worship, we will explore ways to offer live stream and pre-recorded services that will be posted to our website. Keep an eye on the website and our facebook pages for such events. We hope to have morning prayer uploaded to the website before Sunday morning so that when you and your family sleep in, roll out of bed late, and have finished your brunch, you can simply go to our parish website and pray morning prayer with me and a few others (virtually).

Over the course of the next week, we will consider other ways of conducting virtual classes and discussions (my 'Theology of Harry Potter and the Lord of the Rings' course, for example) so stay tuned for further details.

In the ancient church, many zealous Christians sought refuge in the desert and in the mountains, distancing themselves from the broader human community in order to more intensely pursue purity of heart and a deeper relation to God. During this time of isolation and 'social distancing' (i.e., attempting to limit time spent with others in order to mitigate the continued spread of the disease), we need not turn only to Netflix and video games for support. Many of us have already committed to my 'Daily Office Challenge' and the next few weeks, with whatever work and school closures that may be ahead, is a perfect opportunity for us to continue our Lenten observances, to enter more deeply into prayer, and to seek continued spiritual growth in what may become for some an excess of downtime. Isolation and contemplative solitude are not mutually exclusive, and where the former may be required of us, the latter may come as a support during trying times. Furthermore, as long as you are healthy, I think we should all feel encouraged to pray the daily office with one another in small groups (even groups of 2-4 people). Continuing to gather for prayer, even when our larger communal services are not available, can be a great spiritual and social strength. If you have forgotten how to do morning or evening prayer, please consult the explanatory PDF

here: https://drive.google.com/file/d/14az1_QRuatdqPZ29YkRyky0goz34leCH/view.

I hope to keep food pantry open, but will have to speak with food pantry leadership to modify our current practices in order to mitigate risk for our faithful pantry volunteers and our patrons.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to me by phone or email with any questions or concerns that you may have. As of this writing, I still have scheduled Army training this weekend and all week next week, so please excuse me if my responses to emails and phone calls is delayed. I will do my best to keep up with everything as we modify some of our practices as a community. I am hoping to find a way to keep Janice working from home as much as possible, but we will work more on that in the beginning of next week. For now, her email is admin@holytrinityfay.org (my previous parish-wide email had a typo with her email address) and if you need to get in contact with her, that should be the primary form of communication in the weeks ahead.

We will continue to work with our phone tree and emergency pastoral care responses. Please do not hesitate to let me know if you are in need of emergency supplies, food or prayer. We will do all that we can to support one another during this ongoing pandemic and will provide updates along the way.

Faithfully,
Edward+