

Dear St. Edward's Church Family,

In light of the current pandemic, the scripture verse that comes to mind is 2 Timothy 1:7, "God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind." We know that God is all-powerful. We know that we are called to love God and to love our neighbor. And we are called to live in self-discipline and calm discernment. We refuse to walk in fear, but we do want to walk in wisdom and caution and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Those in good health who are not afraid of contracting the virus must consider the more vulnerable populations whom they would put at risk. It is important that we all work to minimize the spread of the coronavirus. Bishop Brewer wrote recently, "We are not acting out of fear, but acting out of love."

We are taking the following steps of prudence and caution and love.

- 1) **As of now we will continue to have church on Sundays.** However, if you are more vulnerable to the sickness you are encouraged to stay home. If you are sick in any way, please stay home. If you are staying home over the next few weeks, please call our church office and let us know so that we can pray for you and know your status. Our sermons are posted on our webpage and on our social media outlets. You may also give online. If we need to suspend Church worship on Sundays in the near future, we will let you know as soon as possible.
- 2) **Holy water fonts will be removed from church entrances.** This one probably needs no explanation.
- 3) **Please use caution when we share the peace.** Share the peace in words and gestures. Please avoid hugs and handshakes during this time.
- 4) **It is acceptable to only receive the bread at communion.** While we will still offer the sacramental wine, you still receive full communion if you choose to only receive the bread. For the foreseeable future, we will be using only our silver chalices. There may be point in the future where we only offer the bread.
- 5) **The Community Dinner for tonight is *TAKE OUT* only.** You may come inside to pick up your meal or drive around to the back door of the kitchen and we will bring the meal to you. Take Out service will begin at 6:30 PM.

- 6) **The Stations of the Cross and the Saturday Prayer Seminar are postponed.** We will reassess the situation regarding other future gatherings of worship, learning, and fellowship in the near future.
- 7) **Share God's love with those around you.** This is a time for the church to share the love of Jesus, not recoil in fear. *There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear...* (1 John 4:18).
- 8) **Pray for one another.** Praying is the primary thing we do as Christians. I urge you to increase your time of prayer.
- 9) Please reach out to me or Deacon Kim, Deacon Bob, or Deacon Mickey with any questions, concerns, and needs you may have. **We are here to serve you and to pray with you.**

God is good even in times of confusion, uncertainty, and anxiety. It is Christ within in us that is the hope of glory (Colossians 1:27). May we be confident in Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior.

Blessings, Health, and Peace in the Name of our Lord,

Rev. Mark A. Lafler+

Rector

St. Edward's Episcopal Church