

Saint John's Anglican Church

The Very Reverend David F. Klein, ssc Rector
The Reverend William T. Estes, Assistant to the Rector
The Reverend Dr. Robert W. Bosworth, Jr. *retired*, Pastoral Associate

A traditional Anglican Parish in the Diocese of Fort Worth

March 17, 2020
St. Patrick, Bishop and Apostle of Ireland

Dear Parish Family,

We all are aware of the growing spread of the coronavirus, COVID-19. It is a topic of concern for many of us. We now see in sharper focus things we take for granted that now must be re-thought and how we go about the routines of our daily lives. The CDC website (cdc.gov) provides information and updates about the virus and appropriate steps we all can take to limit exposure to COVID-19.

In addition, Bishop Ryan Reed has offered several communications to the clergy about how best to approach liturgical practice and traditions, especially during Lent; and how to best conduct the Holy Eucharist and other services, until the virus is gone.

The Most Rev. Dr. Foley Beach, Archbishop and Primate, Anglican Church in North America (ACNA) issued a Pastoral Letter that was read by Fr. Bosworth this past Sunday, March 15th at both the 9:00 am and 11:15 am services. Archbishop Beach is calling on parishes of the ACNA to a time of prayer and fasting for the healing of those now sick and as a way to spiritually combat the virus itself. In these testing times, not only do we want to take proper precautions to prevent the spread of the virus, but we must intensify our prayers for God's grace.

At the beginning of Lent the Church called us to a holy Lent, by prayer, fasting, almsgiving and works of charity. We hear this call again, but now from our Archbishop. Can you increase your daily prayers to St. Michael the "defending Archangel" who "helps and defends us on earth" (BCP 632) as our contribution to help him in defending our souls and the souls of many from illness and the loss of life? Could you offer a day of fasting to God for the healing of those now sick, or for those involved in research for vaccines and a better understanding of this virus?

As your Rector your health and safety are always a primary concern of my pastoral ministry. After much reading about the coronavirus and prayer I believe it is best that we move forward with the following plan to be put into place *effective Wednesday, March 18th and continue through Saturday, April 4th*. (You will be notified if any changes to our regular Holy Week schedule must be made.)

Our Plan

- Beginning this week, we are suspending all weekday choir rehearsals. This includes the chancel choirs, bell choir, and children's choir. The choir will rehearse on Sunday morning at 10:30 am. We will have hymns at the 9:00 am service for congregational singing but the choir will be at the 11:15 am service only.
- We will continue to offer the Stations of the Cross on Wednesday evenings at 6:00 pm during Lent, being March 18, 25, and Apr 1st. But we will discontinue our meal and book study. Please hang on to the book, because during Eastertide we will continue this book study on Sunday mornings. A schedule for that will be available at a later date.

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- We are suspending Coffee hour. No food will be served but coffee will be available.
- We are suspending the atriums for the children.
- Adult Confirmation Class with Fr. Estes will continue as scheduled, from 10:15-11:00 in order to be completed before the Bishop's visit on Pentecost Sunday.
- Holy Communion will continue to be offered with the consecrated host only.

We will maintain our regular worship schedule. Our weekday masses, Wednesdays, 7:00 am and 11:00 am will continue. Our weekend masses, Saturdays at 6:00 pm and Sundays at 8:00, 9:00 and 11:15 am will continue as scheduled. If you hesitate to attend a Sunday morning service, consider attending Saturday evening or one of the masses on Wednesday. If the need arises, we will offer masses on additional weekdays.

Finally, I am looking into the ability of live streaming the services we offer. This is not extremely difficult or expensive to do. This will allow anyone to connect to St. John's through video and internet, by accessing our Facebook media, YouTube, or the front page of our website. More on this soon.

By making these simple pastoral adjustments, my focus is to allow us to gather for worship often to receive Holy Communion and still be safe and within the guidelines issued by the city of Fort Worth and CDC recommendations. We must understand that there is no power on earth greater than the Holy Eucharist. The Holy Eucharist is given by God to the Church for the healing and salvation of souls. It is the source of all healing, strength and graces. For this reason alone, and especially at this time of distress, it is most important that we make Holy Communion available to all who seek the Lord Jesus Christ.

In closing, let us not forget how this situation is having huge financial ramifications for so many, especially for the poor, but also those with less stable employment, parents who need to work and are unable to obtain childcare when schools close, and those without health insurance.

We know that God never wills suffering. We are fragile creatures, even in a global and connected world. We know that God can, and will, bring good out of evil. We know that God is already at work using all of this to better focus us on the things in life that really matter, such as worship of God, prayer, family, generosity, and charity for everyone.

In this season of Lent, let us continue to turn to God fervently, giving ourselves to His sacred Heart. Let us never forget how God is always in charge, even of trials and tribulations, and we must find our rest in Him with total trust. This is what we must always do.

May we continue to grow a culture that seeks to receive, love and serve the Lord!

In Christ,

Fr. David F. Klein, Rector