



March 13, 2020

Dear Friends,

As you have heard, together with the other Episcopal and ELCA Lutheran bishops in Michigan, Bishop Perry has directed all congregations to “refrain from coming together for in-person worship for the remainder of the month of March.” We’re doing this to protect public health, which is part of our baptismal covenant to respect the dignity of every person. We are acting out of a sense of love for our neighbors. This letter outlines what it means for Christ Church.

Experts say that to slow the spread of COVID-19, the best thing we can do (apart from washing our hands and not touching our faces) is to practice social distancing, or caring for one another from a distance. A few weeks to a month of giving a little extra distance could do a world of good. Studies have shown that the number of cases can be reduced and the onset of peak illness delayed, giving health care workers more time to prepare. But only if enough people get on board.

The Episcopal Church is on board. We are pulling together with our city and state government, our schools, our libraries, March Madness, the NBA, Broadway, and so many other organizations. **We are in this together.** Here are our plans:

1. Throughout the rest of March, in-person worship services will not be held at Christ Church. Our next in-person Sunday service currently is planned for Palm Sunday, April 5.
2. These next three Sundays, March 15, March 22, and March 29, Rev. Emily will be on-site from 8:00-11:00am and our doors will be open for private prayer. At 10:30am, Emily will broadcast a brief liturgy and sermon on Facebook Live. You do not need to have a Facebook account in order to watch Facebook Live. Simply go to <https://www.facebook.com/ChristChurchDetroit/>.
3. Meetings, programs, and other worship services will not meet in person. This includes:
 - a. Thursday Centering Prayer
 - b. Thursday Lenten Soup Supper and Deep River Program (the soloists will be broadcast on Facebook Live on Thursdays at 7pm, so you can watch from home)
 - c. Saturday Floral Working Sessions and Altar Guild Cleaning/Polishing Sessions
 - d. Committee Meetings such as Green Team, Buildings & Grounds, Outreach, and Vestry
 - e. Choir, Youth Choir, and Handbell Rehearsals
 - f. Sunday School, Adult Bible Study, Breakfast, and Coffee Hour
 - g. Monday Money Counters

Possible exceptions may include the AA and GA groups, and the Reconstructionist Congregation of Detroit (the synagogue with whom we share space). We are in touch with their leadership about their needs during this crisis.

4. We heartily encourage committee leaders to engage video/conference call technology to facilitate discussions of ongoing projects; for example, the Vestry will use this technology. Our

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excellent Associate for Communications, Beth Ann Tesluk, will be providing us all with direct support. Contact her with questions: bethann@christcd.org.

5. The office will remain OPEN, generally Monday-Friday 10am-3pm. You are welcome to call, drop by, ask questions, ask for prayer, or anything else you need. If you need to meet one-on-one or with a very small group (such as with a building contractor or two), that is perfectly fine. Since Rev. Emily is encouraging staff – and herself – to work at home as much as needed, if you need to speak with someone in particular, please do call ahead.
6. Rev. Emily remains available by phone (cell phone is best: 312-339-9686) or email (emily@christcd.org), and will be making pastoral visits in homes or hospitals as needed. Our Lay Eucharistic Visitors will not be making visits at this time. Please do reach out to Rev. Emily if you or someone you know is in need of any care whatsoever.
7. Please reach out to one another. Our “shepherds”, pastoral caregivers, and other leaders will be checking in. When in doubt, make that call, send that message; although this is a time of physical distance, we need not let that become emotional or spiritual distance. Now more than ever, we need to look out for one another!
8. We also are reaching out to community organizations to see how we can help our neighbors in need, and we’ll let you know of opportunities as they arise.

Our Lord Jesus Christ was born into the world in a time of unrest, poverty, suffering, and oppression. He taught us to love and care for one another, in the midst of all that was wrong in the world. He spent his time with the poor, the sick, and the vulnerable. And when he was arrested, condemned, and put to death, he didn’t use his divine power to call down a host of warrior angels to save him. Instead, he faced death, even a painful and shameful death, in solidarity with us—and trusted in God to bring about resurrection. And God did. God always, always brings abundant life, right from the middle of chaos, pain, loss, and fear.

These next few weeks and possibly months will be unsettling. Pray for one another, for our community, and for the world. If you have a Book of Common Prayer, read through it, paying particular attention to the collects, prayers, and thanksgivings. (You can find the BCP online at bcponline.org). Take time to read the Bible, too. In these next days and weeks, we’ll be in touch with further information and opportunities to grow in faith and strength throughout these challenges.

In conclusion, let us pray:

God of healing and hope, in Jesus you meet us in our places of pain and fear. Look with mercy on those who have contracted the new virus, on any who are vulnerable, and on all who feel in danger. Through this time of global concern, by your Holy Spirit bring out the best – not the worst – in us. Make us more aware of our interdependence on each other, and of the strength that comes from being one body in you; through Jesus Christ our wounded healer. Amen.

– *The Rev. Dr. Samuel Wells, St. Martin-in-the-Fields, London*

Faithfully yours,

The Very Rev. Emily Williams Guffey, Rector
Ms. Lisa Jones, Senior Warden
Mr. Roger Basse, Junior Warden

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