

March 13, 2020-1

Dear Friends:

I am writing to let you know that **in response to the coronavirus, Bishop Rodman has directed congregations of our diocese to suspend all worship services, as well as ministry meetings, events, and activities, through Saturday, March 28.** As we approach Sunday, March 29 the diocesan staff will evaluate the situation and determine whether it is advisable for public worship to resume. I think this directive is wise and St. Paul's will comply.

As Bishop Rodman says in his directive "It is our desire to do our part, in every way possible, to reduce the spread of the virus. Countries ahead of us on the outbreak timeline have valuable lessons to teach us: The sooner we implement more extreme measures to limit contact, the better chance we have of "flattening the curve" of how the disease spreads. This has crucial implications for the most vulnerable among us and for their access to vital lifesaving healthcare interventions including ventilators, medical staff and even hospital beds. Timing is of the essence, and we need to act now."

I see the heart of this directive as being one of pastoral care for all in our St. Paul's parish family. While we will be apart for a time, know that the space between us is filled with care and concern for all. Pastoral care will continue but in new and creative ways.

Clergy are planning to livestream a full Sunday service of Holy Eucharist with homily at 9:00 a.m. on Sunday, March 15 and Sunday, March 22 on our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/stpaulscary/). As usual, the audio recording of the homily will also be available on our website (www.stpaulscary.org).

While the church office will be closed, clergy and staff will be working from home and can be reached by email as well as leaving voicemails. Scheduled meetings can hopefully be moved to Zoom wherever possible.

As for midweek programming, here is what we will be doing for the next two weeks:

1. **Alcoholics Anonymous meetings and counseling services at the Curry Center will continue** in the interest of providing emergency mental health services for those who need it. We strongly advise that best practices and discretion are followed to reduce risk for all participants.
2. **All other meetings taking place at the Church are cancelled.** Please contact your ministry leader for more information, as they may choose to hold meetings online via Zoom or some other platform.
3. **All in-person Adult, Youth, and Children's Formation activities are cancelled.** Again, please contact your ministry leaders if you have questions about possible online offerings.

4. **St. Paul's Preschool is following its protocol when there is illness in the community and will follow Wake County Schools decisions regarding closing.** This is consistent with standing preschool policy.

We will be made stronger through this as we create some new and creative ways to approach ministry. Please follow our website for updates as we continue to respond to a quickly evolving situation.

May God's blessing be on all of us as we journey through this Lenten season.

George