

MOTHER JANET'S COVID-19 PASTORAL UPDATE WEDNESDAY MARCH 18

Dear Christ Church Members and Friends,

I'm sitting in my usual morning coffee-and-prayer chair looking out at my backyard at a day that's trying to become sunny – and promises to be warmer later on. Season in and season out, I begin and end my day in this chair with this view of sky and trees, bushes and flowers, birds perched on power poles and cables, and squirrels racing along the back fence – a squirrel highway that runs the length of this neighborhood.

My parish directories, photo and contact, are close at hand, because they are part of what I use in my prayer. I pray for people in our parish and in my life who I know are in need of prayer, and I pray for our whole community a few pages each day across the week. I have my bible there, and books of poetry, some bible commentaries, and icons.

This place is where I think about you, hold you close, where I write my sermons, and now these letters, and email back and forth with you about a variety of things, especially now that we are keeping to our homes as much as possible in order to keep ourselves safe, our neighbors safe, our neighbors' neighbors safe.

By giving up our usual ways of being together, and finding new ways in this coronavirus time, we honor, and may save the lives, of people close to us and people we will never know; we will make the jobs of all working in our over-stressed health care system a little more do-able; the work of grocery store employees safer and easier. Given the suffering and grief already caused by COVID-19 and the suffering and grief to come, our sacrifice of "church as usual" to prevent the further spread of the virus seems a small sacrifice to make. We have so many ways to do and be "church at home together" as we wait this situation out.

Here are some ways we are working to create Christ Church's "church at home together."

1. Our website.

All new worship materials will be posted on the website on the new Household Worship page: a new worship booklet for each Sunday, the Christ Church Stations of the Cross booklet and other materials as we develop and post them. Know that we send these materials by postal mail to those without internet access.

2. Addressing your needs.

Deacon Gen Grewell is putting together two ministry teams:

- A. Phone call team to check-in with all parishioners on a periodic basis just to connect and see how you're doing.
- B. Practical needs team to run errands, pick up groceries, provide meals and so on as you may need.

Both teams will be up and running within a week or so. If you would like to volunteer for either team, or you need help now from the practical needs team, please contact Gen. If you have email, please contact her at ggrewell@ecww.org. If you don't have email, call her cell 360-280-5593

3. Zoom Connection

Committees and the Vestry are meeting by Zoom, an application that allows us to see and speak with one another in groups by computer, laptop, and smart-phone. You can get a free Zoom account that allows you to "Zoom" with others (individually and in groups) for 40 minute meetings. You might give it a try (Go to [Zoom.com](https://zoom.com)). I'm learning how to organize Zoom pastoral meetings and will announce that when I have finished thinking it through.

4. Father Torvend will soon provide some simple suggestions for our new lives at home – ideas for organizing our days around prayer, work, ministry, play – simple practices to order our days and help us move in an intentional and focused way through this time.

5. I am available by email and want to hear from you if you are troubled, anxious, sick, have questions or suggestions – or if you just need to communicate with me. As I said above, I hope soon to be able to do this by Zoom as well.

6. I'll communicate with you all twice a week – a pastoral letter mid-week, and the Weekly on Friday. As we put this in place I'll begin to adjust the content so my letter is mostly reflective and pastoral, and the Weekly is both informational and a source of helpful things I come across on my own or that you send me.

PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING:

OUR BUILDINGS ARE CLOSED TO ALL GATHERINGS UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE—whether worship or meetings. **Those of you with keys** are asked **not to use them** to enter Church, Trinity House or Wells Hall. We want to avoid any gatherings of any size for the time being. Only our staff and the Multicare office staff are to be in the buildings. Occasionally, Shannon will ask a volunteer to come in for essential business, such as counting, check signing, taking a deposit to the bank, taking out a mailing. **There is no admittance to the buildings without Shannon's permission.**

We encourage all committees and ministries to meet by phone or by Zoom until it is deemed safe to be gathered together physically.

PLEASE CONTINUE YOUR GIVING – I hope you received Monday's letter from Senior Warden Dennis Johnson and Stewardship Chair Brianne Knudson sent by email (and mailed by hard copy to those without email). As Dennis said in last night's Zoom Vestry Meeting, "We survive as a community by contributing as a community." When the church is not meeting on Sundays, our income takes a dive

unless we are diligent in keeping up our pledges and giving by mail, by setting up bank transfers, by giving through our website (an option that will be up and running by this weekend.) Should giving significantly decrease, there may be a visit from the Dreaded Pledge Hog, who not come in but sit at your door, observing all recommended social distance practices.

Although there is much we can do to help ourselves, our families and friends, and our various communities in this time, the Collect of the Day for last Sunday, the Third Sunday in Lent, is also true and helpful for our prayer:

Almighty God, you know that we have no power in ourselves to help ourselves: Keep us both outwardly in our bodies and inwardly in our souls, that we may be defended from all adversities that may happen to the body, and from all evil that may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

(The Book of Common Prayer, p. 218)

And I end and I will, all through Lent, with one of the Lent Prayers over the Assembly, over you all, wherever you are:

*Keep this your family, Lord,
with your never-failing mercy,
that relying solely on the help of your heavenly grace,
they may be upheld by your divine protection,
through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

Blessings to you all,
and Peace,
Janet+