

FROM MOTHER JANET COVID-19 UPDATE FRIDAY 3/13

Dear Christ Church Members and Friends,

I'm sitting in my morning coffee-and-prayer chair, looking out the window to my snowy (!) backyard – and thinking of what I want to say to you all. How quickly our lives have been up-ended. Where and how do we find refuge with all that is changing so swiftly around us? We know the answer:

O God of peace,
you have taught us
that in returning and rest we shall be saved,
in quietness and in confidence shall be our strength:
By the might of your Spirit, lift us, we pray,
to your presence,
where we may be still and know that you are God;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.
(The Book of Common Prayer, p. 832)

It's natural to feel anxious and fearful in this extraordinary time. I hope that each of us, whether we are quarantined at home or out in the world at work, will create for ourselves times of silence and stillness in which we may return (turn our attention) to God and rest in God's peace.

On to things you need to know for now. Please read to the end, because I hope to answer any questions you may have.

SUSPENSION OF SUNDAY WORSHIP

Bishop Rickel, with concern and regret, and following Public Health Directives, has required all churches to suspend any gatherings for at least two weeks, including our worship services.

I'm in complete agreement with him and of course would follow his requirement even if I were not. We do this not just to protect ourselves, but out of love and responsibility for the well-being of the larger community where we live and move and have our being. It is one of the things we can do to slow the spread of this disease.

Not being together for worship and fellowship, not sharing in the Bread of Heaven and Cup of Salvation, is a sacrifice we are asked to make for the common good, ours and others'. And it is a sacrifice – we are a Sunday people whose lives center around our weekly gatherings for worship. We find our strength and courage in the Eucharist, in our classes, in our companionship with one another. For me, for you, nothing can replace those.

Yet we know that the Spirit of the risen Christ is not restricted to times and places and Sacraments, and Christ is surely moving among us now, holding us in community in ways we may not yet see. We are the church – nothing can change that. Nothing will change that. And as soon as we are able to resume worshipping

together, we will. How much more precious our freedom to gather to pray, sing, share communion, be with one another, will seem then.

Your clergy leadership is working to provide resources for Sunday worship in our homes that we can use knowing that others in our community are using the same resources, praying the same prayers. We will seek to provide continuing opportunities for formation and learning, and ways we might keep in touch with one another. You'll start to hear about and receive these next week.

This Sunday, Presiding Bishop Michael Curry will preach at the live-streamed 11:15 a.m. EDT (8:15 PDT) liturgy at Washington National Cathedral, website: cathedral.org. I suggest that as many of us as are able "attend" that service to hear him. Our own Cathedral (saintmarks.org) live-streams its 11:00 a.m. Sunday liturgy and the 9:30 p.m. service of Compline.

MORE THINGS TO KNOW:

PLEASE KEEP IN TOUCH WITH ME – if you are sick or in need of any kind of help, I want to know. If you are anxious or fearful, I want to know. If you are able to offer help to others, please let me know that also. If you just want to say hello, please do. Please use my email contact janet@christchurchtacoma.org

HOME EUCHARISTIC VISITS AND VISITS TO THOSE WHO ARE SICK will only be made in case of an emergency – to protect both visitor and person being visited. Many hospitals and health care residences are restricting outside visits, so visiting there may not be possible at all.

ALL PARISH MEETINGS that aren't necessary for our immediate functioning may be postponed or cancelled. Meetings that must take place should be held virtually. **The most recent Public Health Directive for Religious Organizations requires, by law, that no meetings of any size take place on site without screening and precautions we are not prepared to manage.** The Finance Committee met by Zoom last Wednesday and the Vestry will meet by Zoom this coming Tuesday. A Zoom account is easy to set up (go to Zoom.com), and ministry leaders who feel the need to call a meeting might try using that platform. Other platforms for virtual meetings exist as well.

UPDATED PARISH CONTACT DIRECTORY – to help us stay connected, we will send today (Friday) by email the updated parish directory. We will mail hard copies to those without email accounts. Use this directory not only to reach out to others but to pray for the members for our community. Call or send an email to someone you don't yet know and send your best wishes. Find a prayer partner. Be creative and build community.

COMMUNICATON – The **Weekly** will continue to appear (weekly) in your inbox. More immediate updates will be posted on our **website** (christchurchtacoma.org) and **Facebook** page (facebook.com/christchurchtacoma)

THE PARISH OFFICE STAFF, Shannon and Mary, will continue to be at work in the office (as long as they stay well) and will be available to parishioners by email and phone during the usual hours (Tuesday-Friday, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. **However, we ask that you do not come in to the office unless there is important business that can't be handled by email or phone. Please check with Shannon first** (shannon@christchurchtacoma.org). Thanks to Shannon and Mary for their dedication.

Thank you for reading all this. It's important that we all stay informed. If I haven't answered your question, please let me know. Please continue to check email, website, facebook for updates – whatever works for you. And please take all the recommended precautions for yourselves to be and stay well.

Please continue to pray for all the people around the world, in our country, in our local communities, who are heroically working to understand this disease, quell its spread, and treat those who are ill. Pray for them and for those who are sick or afraid. Pray for our Bishop and his advisors, and for people who continue to show up for work to help us all through this time – transit and delivery workers, store employees, emergency responders, postal and utility workers and more -- and our own office and building staff. Pray for all the members of our own community. Pray.

Psalm 131 (*I find this really good for anxiety and stress*)

O Lord, I am not proud,
I have no haughty looks.

I do not occupy myself with great matters,
or with things that are too hard for me.

But I still my soul and make it quiet,
like a child upon its mother's breast;
my soul is quieted within me.

O Israel, wait upon the Lord,
from this time forth for evermore.

*(When I pray this psalm, I replace "Israel"
with my own name, or the name of the person for whom I'm praying.)*

I'm always available by email (janet@christchurchtacoma.org).
I miss you all and will miss you – but this, even this, will pass.
You are all in my heart and prayers.

With love for you in Christ,
Janet+