

A Pastoral Message from Saint Barnabas

Dear St. Barnabas Family,

Grace and peace to you during this most eventful time in our common life.

The last week has been unlike any I've experienced in my ministry. It's been dizzying, as each successive day and hour, more has been revealed about the ramifications of COVID-19 virus and its potential impact on our church, community and the larger world.

I am writing to notify you about the measures being taken for the best care of our physical, spiritual, and emotional health during this unprecedented time.

It has been decided that this week's worship services (Sunday (3/15), Wednesday (3/18), and Thursday (3/19)) have been suspended.

This was an excruciatingly hard decision; in that we treasure our worship time at St. Barnabas, especially our Sunday mornings. But the fact is, I treasure you more, and I don't want to take any chances at this point in time. In addition to our Church, Christ Church, St. Marks, and St. Davids churches in San Antonio have also suspended their Sunday worship.

Presiding Bishop Michael Curry wrote in a letter this week that "Obedience to the moral primacy of love for our neighbor must direct us."

All non-worship gatherings are also to be cancelled, postponed or moved online. The Sunday Night Dinners will be suspended indefinitely. The Wednesday Lenten Dinners will be suspended for a week as well.

Likewise, our offices will be closed for one week beginning March 16. Staff will be working from home and available to you. As with worship services, the situation will be evaluated prior to re-opening on March 23.

In the coming week we will evaluate the situation and determine when it is advisable for public services and other church activities to resume and what shape they might take.

Please bear with us. This is a pastoral moment unprecedented in our lifetime, and difficult decisions are being made at a very rapid rate. We are responding prayerfully, thoughtfully and with as much grace as we can muster.

In the meantime, the Sunday sermon, scriptures, and prayers will be posted on our home webpage. Also, the Chapel will remain open 24 hours a day, where individually wrapped, blessed wafers will be available.

We also strongly encourage outreach to fellow parishioners through phone calls and social media, and we especially urge you to check in on the most vulnerable and those who are particularly isolated.

God comes to us disguised as our life, and the situation created by the Coronavirus presents us with a unique opportunity to explore ways to deepen our connections to one another, in spite of physical distance.

We are responding in a spirit of unity and as Christ's beloved community. We look to Jesus in times like these to be our companion on the journey, the one who walks with us, the source of our hope and the presence of peace among us.

As the Body of Christ in this moment of uncertainty, let us live into that promise of peace as we find creative ways to stay connected.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to Bur and I with questions or for more information through emails or on our cells,

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We will be there for you if you need us.

Through all that comes, may we continue to witness to the love of God, the promises of Jesus, in and through the challenges we are facing.

In Christ,

The Rev. Jeff Hammond