March 17, 2020

Dear Parish Family,

With Monday’s recommendations about managing the spread of coronavirus by avoiding gatherings of 10 or more people, our bishop has suspended in-person worship and other church gatherings until further notice. This applies to all our worship opportunities – including Sunday mornings, Sunday Evensongs, and the Friday Eucharist – as well as in-person meetings and uses of the church by outside groups. Know that the church office remains open with essential staff, but we’ll follow community standards as the situation evolves.

As I said on Sunday, St. Andrew’s will still worship online. Beginning this week, March 22, we’ll livestream Morning Prayer at both 8:00 and 10:15 a.m. on Sundays. The 8:00 a.m. service will be spoken Morning Prayer, Rite I (language from the 1928 prayer book), with a sermon, two hymns, and a vocal solo, much like the feeling of our standard 8:00 worship. The 10:15 a.m. service will be choral Morning Prayer, Rite II, with sermon, hymns, sung psalms and canticles, and a choir anthem. We’ll also offer Choral Evensong and postlude recitals online the first Sunday of the month at 5 p.m. You can find all our online worship, as always, at standrewkc.org/live-worship/.

In addition, as I said Sunday, we’ve begun offering brief live prayers, three times daily, on Facebook. You can remember it as “8-1-8”: prayers at 8 a.m., 1 p.m., and 8 p.m. In this challenging time, we’ll bless our world, and be blessed ourselves, by praying “together” more often. If you’re a friend of St. Andrew’s on Facebook, the live prayers will appear in your feed when they begin. Or you can find them at the St. Andrew’s Facebook page, @StAndrewsKC.

Our weekly Lenten classes will continue online only. We broadcast the “Way of Love in Lent and Easter” via Facebook Live last Sunday, and we’ll do the same on Thursdays with our “Discovery” class. Both classes begin at 6 p.m. (we’re exploring other streaming options for classes, too).

Of course, Holy Week and Easter will fall within this period of suspended in-person worship. Be assured, we will observe Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, the Easter Vigil, and Easter morning online. The schedule will be as usual and as has been published, other than Easter morning. Typically, our Easter services are identical at 8:00 and 10:15 a.m., so we’ll plan simply to have one service at 10:15 a.m.

Sadly, the suspension of in-person worship means we will delay our new Trailside service at HJ’s, which was to debut April 19. We haven’t yet determined when Trailside will begin.

As the need for funerals arises, we’ll work with families to schedule services in ways that both meet their needs and protect public safety.

As you might guess, asking people to stay home from worship threatens to put the church at a financial disadvantage. With all the attention on how coronavirus is changing our lives, it would be easy to forget
to give. **So, please don’t forget.** You can mail your gifts to the church, give online at standrewkc.org/give/, or text STANDREWKC to 73256.

Regardless of the disruption and threat from coronavirus, know that **you are not alone.** Your church is here for you, in prayer and in action. If you have a need, spiritual or practical, **please tell us** – whether it’s a need for prayer or a need for groceries. There are members of your church family who would love to help. Our only need is to know your need.

The coronavirus crisis threatens us not just physically but economically, relationally, and spiritually, too. I hope you’ll join me in praying for healing and wholeness – for people close to our hearts, for our city, for our nation, and for our world. But sometimes, when situations are this grave, we don’t know quite how to pray. If that describes you, let me offer two thoughts:

- Lean on the *Book of Common Prayer*. See especially the “Prayers for Family and Personal Life” on pages 828-833, as well as the prayers for the sick on pages 458-461. They will give you words you never knew you had.
- Remember that God knows and hears your heart: “The Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words” (Romans 8:26). Especially in a time like this, every “sigh too deep for words” is a prayer honored on high.

In fact, not only are we supported by the Spirit, we are under God’s care. So, let us pray: “Glory to God whose power, working within us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine. Glory to him from generation to generation in the Church, and in Christ Jesus for ever and ever.” (Ephesians 3:20,21)

Peace,

The Rev. John Spicer
Rector