

St. Alban's Episcopal Church and Preschool

1 Church Lane

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The Reverend Kathryn L. King, Rector

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March 13, 2020

To all the members of the St. Alban's Church and Preschool family,

I write to all of you as we find ourselves in the midst of this uncharted territory of responding to the pandemic of Covid 19. The leadership of St. Alban's and I have been closely monitoring the developments reported by the CDC. I have also been involved with phone and video conference calls with Bishop Carlye J. Hughes, the clergy of the Diocese of Newark, Mayor Frank Bivona and the Office of Emergency Management from Franklin Lakes, and the Department of Health. As we are all aware, this is a rapidly evolving and unfolding situation. Taking into account our particular situation at St. Alban's, and the recommendations and actions of the leading authorities, we have determined our next steps in joining the unified effort to limit the spread of this virus.

1. Bishop Hughes has directed that all churches east of Dover will engage 'a fast from public worship' for the next three Sundays of Lent. The situation will be reevaluated on March 30th with the hope of returning to public worship for Palm Sunday.
2. We have entered a contract for a professional deep cleaning of the entire church facility. This two-day disinfecting process requires that the building be completely shut-down for two consecutive days. We were able to schedule this for Saturday and Sunday, March 14-15. All hard and soft surfaces throughout the church and education wing as well as the interior and exterior doors will be treated. This is necessary as we have hundreds of people in and out of the building each week many of who are from identified vulnerable portions of the population.
3. Following the completion of the deep cleaning we will adhere to new health and safety protocols for anyone entering the building. After the three-week worship fast we will instruct on best practices for worship and communal gatherings once it is determined that such gatherings are in the best interest of all.
4. The preschool staff will work in the building during the closure to disinfect all the classroom and educational items including toys, manipulatives, and books.
5. Along with houses of worship across the country we are preparing to offer streaming of worship services through the end of March. I have asked Dean Mohamed to coordinate and research what is needed to accomplish this. It is my intention to lead a worship service with music and 3-4 additional leaders to sing hymns and create a corporate worship experience in which you may participate from home. Additional directions and materials will be forthcoming.
6. We follow the directives of Oakland and Franklin Lakes and therefore the preschool will be closed beginning Monday, March 16th. Our buildings will not be closed but there will be no public services of worship or large group gatherings.

During this unprecedented time we will do what we always do and remain connected to each other. We are all in this time together. Anyone who has a need, either physical, emotional, or spiritual is encouraged to contact me on my cell or through the parish office so that we, as a family of faith, can be present for each other.

Beloved of God, you are our deepest and highest priority. The leadership and I will continue to monitor and respond to developments in real time communicating with you via email blasts, our website and Facebook pages, and phone calls. We will also include information on the church and school office answering machines. Please don't just call to *hear* information – please keep us aware of your situation and needs. I am here to talk and pray with you on the phone as well as help coordinate for any needs you may have. This is especially true for seniors and parents with young children who may find venturing out difficult or unwise. If you are willing to help with shopping or needs that others may have please let me know that. And if you have a need please allow us, your family of faith, the gift of serving you following the example of Christ.

May God's grace fill you peace and may Christ's people surround you in love,

Kathryn+

I offer this prayer for all of our use in this time of anxiousness and disease

Prayer for a Pandemic, by Cameron Bellm

May we who are merely inconvenienced

Remember those whose lives are at stake.

May we who have no risk factors

Remember those most vulnerable.

May we who have the luxury of working from home

Remember those who must choose between preserving their health or making their rent.

May we who have the flexibility to care for our children when their schools close

Remember those who have no options.

May we who have to cancel our trips

Remember those that have no safe place to go.

May we who are losing our margin money in the tumult of the economic market

Remember those who have no margin at all.

May we who settle in for a quarantine at home

Remember those who have no home.

As fear grips our country,

let us choose love.

During this time when we cannot physically wrap our arms around each other,

Let us yet find ways to be the loving embrace of God to our neighbors. *Amen.*