

E Blast
March 20, 2020

Weekly Update About COVID-19 to the SsAM Community

How one week has dramatically changed our lives with the spread of the Corona Virus here in Delaware and across the country and the world. We live in a very different world than we did just one week ago. Last Friday we were scrambling to make sense of the Governor's State of Emergency and since that time, that order has been expanded and modified as the situation becomes more dangerous. Bishop Brown has begun to check in with the clergy every week using ZOOM. These virtual gatherings allow the bishop to update us and support us as we navigate these very troubled waters. Many clergy are giving regular updates to their parishes and this week's E Blast serves that purpose for SsAM. I wish to review what is happening at the moment and plans for worship that will take effect this Sunday.

The Staff is Working Hard during this time: I wish to applaud the difficult and faithful work of D-L Casson, David Christopher, Brenda Demby, Marlon Rochester, Mary Cooper and Cory Bell. The sextons have extra work as they are regularly disinfecting the entire physical plant to ensure its cleanliness so that we might all be safe and healthy. When you have a second please thank the staff for being here for all of us at this time. At the moment we are here but realize that at some point in the future we may be working remotely from our homes.

Worship: Last week Bishop Brown suspended all public worship for March 15th and 22nd. I have a feeling that this suspension will continue through holy week and Easter and possibly beyond. I will send an update once I know what the bishop's decision will be. In the meantime churches on Sunday morning are to offer a service of morning prayer or the celebration of the holy Eucharist attended by no more than ten people as mandated by Governor Carney's state of emergency declaration. Churches that stream their services are encouraged to do while this suspension is in place. **For the foreseeable future here is the schedule that we will follow at SsAM:**

7:00AM Monday through Sunday. I will offer the service of Morning Prayer on Facebook Live. You may follow the service with a copy of the *Book of Common Prayer* or download it at www.bcponline.org. You may also Google other online prayer book resources.

12:00PM Sunday live streaming a celebration of the Holy Eucharist from SsAM. The reason for the time change is to not conflict with the live stream that Bishop Brown will be offering from the St. Alban's Center on Sunday morning at 11. All members of the Episcopal Church in Delaware are invited to join Bishop Brown on Facebook Live. You do not need Facebook account to access the service. Information can be found at: <http://delaware.church/how-to-link-to-a-facebook-live-video/>.

I hope to "see" you on Sunday. This will continue until the suspension of public worship is lifted or the governor closes down the state completely because of the spread of the virus. We will continue to monitor this situation as information becomes available. You may download the Sunday worship leaflet at www.ssam.org/sunday-documents.

I also encourage you to look at what other Episcopal parishes are offering for daily prayer services. You may do this on Facebook. I know that St. Peter's in Lewes offers daily evening prayer and they have included our offer of morning prayer. Trinity Episcopal Parish in Wilmington is offering the beautiful service of Compline at 7:00 on their Facebook page.

Staying Connected with one another during this time: This is vitally important at this critical time. A group of parishioners are in contact with our shut in community by phone. Our shut in population is at the most risk at this time and they are being cared for. Each week they receive a package in the mail from SsAM to help them stay connected. Bishop Brown is encouraging that we find a way to stay connected with everyone in the parish. To that end I sent a video message to the leaders of various ministries such as the choir, altar guild, acolytes, vestry, ushers and property to name a few. I have asked these leaders to be in touch with their members and then encourage members of each of these ministries to be in touch with one another via phone or email.

Fulfilling Your Pledge at this time: During this difficult time your financial pledge is very important and I wish to encourage you to keep your pledge up to date. I realize that the closing of businesses has and will cause a financial hardship and it is important that you take care of your families and loved ones. If you already are having your pledge debited from your bank account this will continue. If you usually place your offering in the collection plate please send your pledge to SsAM in the mail. If you would like to make a pledge you may also do so. You may also donate using a credit card through the SsAM website. The link is at the bottom of the homepage. These are challenging times for many in the City of Wilmington and if you would like to give to the Rector's discretionary account so that I might help this at risk population you may also send a check to the rector's discretionary account.

Pray without Ceasing: Take time each day to be still and to know God. There are wonderful resources to help center during this time. You may visit the blog of our own Christina Brennan Lee at <http://prayersofthepeople.blogspot.com> as well as Danny Schweers wonderful and timely photo prayer at www.photoprayer.com. The meditation and centering prayer ministry will be meeting virtually during this time. If you would like to join on zoom please email parishadmin@ssam.org and include meditation in the subject line.

At the moment we are open and serving our community by offering our public rest room and Friendship House continues to provide services daily from 7 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. They will be modifying the Sunday breakfast by providing hardboiled eggs and coffee.

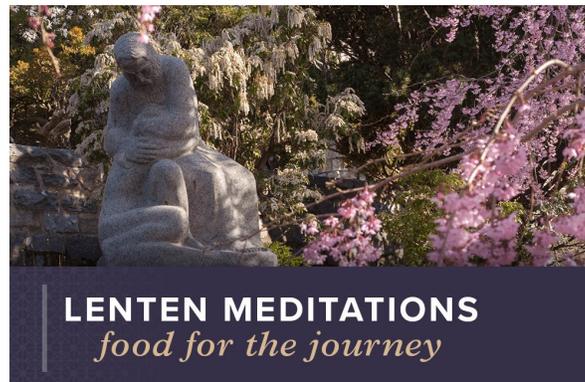
Fr. Richard Rohr's reflection from Thursday was very timely and wish to close with one quote from Fr. Richard:

“We are in the midst of a highly teachable moment. There’s no doubt that this period will be referred to for the rest of our lifetimes. We have a chance to go deep, and to go broad. Globally, we’re in this together. Depth is being forced on us by great suffering, which as I like to say, always leads to great love.

But for God to reach us, we have to allow suffering to wound us. Now is no time for an academic solidarity with the world. Real solidarity needs to be felt and suffered. That’s the real meaning of the word “suffer” – to allow someone else’s pain to influence us in a real way. We need to move beyond our own personal feelings and take in the whole.”

Peace and stay healthy,

Fr. David+



The Rev. Canon Rosemarie Logan Duncan, Canon for Worship

Lent 24

Mark 12:28-34

One of the scribes came near and heard Jesus and the Saducees disputing with one another, and seeing that Jesus answered them well, he asked him, “Which commandment is the first of all?” Jesus answered, “The first is, ‘Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ The second is this, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.” Then the scribe said to him, “You are right, Teacher; you have truly said that ‘he is one, and besides him there is no other’; and ‘to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength,’ and ‘to love one’s neighbor as oneself,’ — this is much more important than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.” When Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.” After that no one dared to ask him any question.

just the other night, I received a text message from one of my next door neighbors, that read, "Check your front porch. Dropping something off."

When I opened the door, to my surprise there sat a large basket full of food staples and some delightful goodies. The card attached featured a picture of Mr. Rogers with the words, "Hey Neighbor." Judy and I were the recipients of a surprise gift of generosity.

Only days before, my neighbor Daniel had called to check on Judy and me as he hadn't seen us in our regular pattern of coming and going. I let him know then that I was on self-quarantine and that we were faring well.

It occurred to me in that very moment that my next door neighbors had expressed a true act of love. The kind of thoughtful and compassionate love that Jesus is referring to in our reading from Mark's gospel. In our lesson, when questioned by one of the scribes about the greatest commandment, Jesus gave him a clear answer: the greatest among many things that man could do is to love. To love God wholly and totally (with one's heart, soul, mind, and strength) and to love one's neighbor as ourselves are the greatest commandments of all. These two are inseparable. This message is particularly important for us to hear right now.

While we have had other times of uncertainty, we are facing something unlike anything we've lived through before, so that commandment to love has an even deeper meaning. As Christians, we need to reach out in tangible ways to let our neighbors know that they are loved, and part of loving our neighbors is reminding them they are not alone. We are in this together.

Loving our neighbors during this unsettling period can be reflected in a variety of ways. It could be an encouraging phone call to those who are isolated and fearful or making a trip to the grocery store or pharmacy for sick or elderly family, friends, and yes, the neighbor next door. It is buying supplies to share and not hoard.

Even in these times of social distancing, we can safely reach out in mercy and love. So as we and the entire world live into the weeks ahead, may we commit ourselves to the greatest commandment we've received as followers of Jesus: to love God and love neighbor as we love ourselves.

Faithfully,
Rose+
