



Church of the Good Shepherd

155 Wyllys Street, Hartford CT 06106

May 26, 2020

Dear parishioners and friends of the Good Shepherd,

Peace to you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, who sustains and strengthens us with the Spirit to guide us in working in the love of God that lives within us. God is life, the heart of all creation.

Jesus said, “*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.*” *This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’*” Saint Matthew 22:37-39

Our life has changed totally and unexpectedly in such a short time. This microscopic cell, which we will never see at plain sight, has turned our lives upside down! What we took for granted, such as a hand shake or a hug, we can no longer share it with loved ones and friends. Now we have to rethink our actions, all that we do. Anyone can be infected unknowingly, and we do not want to place at risk the life of others! It is not about loving those who love me, or loving those whom I love, on the contrary we are to love each other, all humanity. More than that, we are to love all living creatures, all that is essential that sustains life on this earth. Our bishops of the Episcopal Church in Connecticut, Bishop Ian T. Douglas and Bishop Laura J. Ahrens, in their newsletter for May 22nd, ask us consider the next steps in our life as a parish living with COVID-19: *What is God up to in the midst of COVID-19? What are we learning in this time of change and disorientation? Where do we see the risen Christ even as we experience loss, illness and death brought on by the coronavirus?* We are to go deeper into our hearts and spirit to search, ponder, what are the theological workings behind all this.

People keep asking when are we re-opening the doors of the church building. On May 19th we had our Vestry meeting. The Guidelines and Protocols required to prepare the building prior to re-opening were handed out to each member. The Vestry considers that before we re-open, we have to do all that is required to minimize any risk. We are not finalizing on a date, we first have to implement all the requirements necessary for the safety of the people. And it requires a lot of work! Among the guidelines: we are to continue with social distancing and mark the six foot distancing for each sitting area on the pews. Each person has to wear a mask or face covering, use disposable gloves, and have hand sanitizer available. All the books, the Book of Common Prayer, Hymnals, Bibles, have to be removed from the pews. The service order will be projected on a screen. There will be no singing at all, we will have music, but no singing. And there are many other items that we need to comply with to minimize risk.

Our Bishops also ask us that as we make our decisions, “...to remember that as the Body of Christ, and followers of Jesus, we are always called to care for the least and the vulnerable in our midst.” So we ask that if you have a health condition that puts you at risk, or if you are 65 years old or more, please stay at home. What we are doing comes from the love we have for each of you, we want to avoid any risk that may harm your health, please stay safe at home. We are working to find a way to provide live streaming of Sunday services. We are waiting for a provider to install Wi-Fi in the sanctuary.

On another note, at the beginning of the year I had planned my vacation for June 2nd through the 22nd. Yes, please, I need to take time off! My vacation was reduced to two weeks from Tuesday, June 2nd, to Monday the 15th. The Rev. Jennifer Pilat, Chaplain, Seabury Retirement Community in Bloomfield, will supply Facebook video streaming for our Spanish speakers (and she will help and teach me how it is done) Fr. Peter Bushnell and Fr. Steve Ling will continue with our Sunday Morning Prayer via zoom.

We all have to take care of each other and of ourselves, so rest, take time to be centered in God. Pray for our families, our neighbors, for the whole world! As the apostles did, after Jesus ascended to the Father. “*When the day of Pentecost had come, the disciples were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit...*”
Acts of the Apostles 2:1-4a

“O God, who on the day of Pentecost taught the hearts of your faithful people by sending to them the light of your Holy Spirit: Grant us by the same Spirit to have a right judgment in all things, and evermore to rejoice in his holy comfort; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*” BCP

Peace,

Mother Loyda+

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