



The Episcopal Diocese of San Joaquin

The Central Third of California

March 13, 2020

Sisters and Brothers of The Episcopal Diocese of San Joaquin,

We know that we are all inundated with information and commentaries regarding COVID-19. And we also acknowledge concerns, regarding this virus, continue to mount. A number of Dioceses in The Episcopal Church have decided to suspend public worship over the next few weeks and to reassess the situation at that juncture. We need to advise you that we are considering the prospect of urging a practice of fasting of public worship for the sake of the most vulnerable in our midst in the Diocese.

For this Sunday, March 15th, if you choose to have Eucharist rather than Morning Prayer, we urge you to replace homemade bread with the use of wafers. The recommendation being made is social distancing, which means you need to keep 6 feet in all the movements in the Eucharist, unless you are receiving bread directly from the celebrant, and keep that distance in our pews. We strongly recommend the Peace be a verbal acclamation whilst observing the recommended distance. If your faith community has coffee hour, we encourage using prepackaged food. In addition, all food should be served by one person who has gloves on, and coffee containers should not be handled by more than one person.

We encourage your faith communities to begin, or continue, conversations around the possibility of suspension. This includes such areas as:

- Live streaming worship on Sunday's
 - Contact Dcn. Angela if you plan to use ZOOM for live-streaming in your place.
 - Bishop David would provide live-streamed Morning Prayer during those Sunday's while in suspension, including a homily for the day, accessible by all in the Diocese and beyond.
- Shift all meetings to an online format
 - Be in touch with Dcn. Angela for a ZOOM link for these meetings
- Administrative personnel working from home
- Pastoral care visitations
- Pay for hourly employees
- How people continue to financially support their faith communities at a distance

We caringly urge that if you are feeling unwell, for your own sake and for the sake of others, please stay home.

If you have flu type symptoms, and they persist, please go see your physician, and for your sake and the sake of others, please stay home.

If you are immune compromised, have diabetes, or have recently had surgery, namely if you're vulnerable, for your sake and the sake of others, please stay home.

And if you choose to stay home, please let someone in your faith community know that you have made that decision so that they can extend you pastoral care.

Next week, you should anticipate additional instructions from our office.

Please continue to join our Church in praying for our community and for the world:

God of the present moment, God who in Jesus stills the storm and soothes the frantic heart; bring hope and courage to all who wait or work in uncertainty. Bring hope that you will make them the equal of whatever lies ahead. Bring them the courage to endure what cannot be avoided, for your will is health and wholeness; you are God, and we need you. (Prayer for People Critically Ill or Facing Great Uncertainty, Adapted from New Zealand Prayer Book)

You remain in our daily prayers.

Blessings,

+David, Canon Anna, and Dcn. Angela