

March 13, 2020

Dear Friends,

After prayerful consideration and informed by the best scientific evidence and medical advice to date, we have decided to take extra precautions during this time of uncertainty around the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) public health crisis. **The buildings of Trinity Episcopal Church will be closed to all gatherings through March 29.** This is not a decision we have made lightly, and we believe it is consonant with Christ's commandment to love our neighbors as ourselves.

One of the best ways of slowing down the rate of transmission of COVID-19 — “flattening the curve”—is to refrain from gathering in groups. So we will join the Central Bucks Schools, the Trinity Buckingham Academy and many Bucks and Montgomery County businesses and agencies and churches and close our doors until March 30. This period of closure could be extended further, based on any number of rapidly changing variables. We will keep you informed.

On Sunday March 15, Pastor Nancy will be at the church at our usual worship service times to greet any visitors or parishioners who are unaware of this decision to be closed. She will pray with any who wish, but will not celebrate Eucharist.

You are urged to spend time on Sunday (as every day) in prayer for one another, for the church, for our nation and for the world. Mission Saint Clare offers an easy way to say Morning and/or Evening Prayer: <https://www.missionstclare.com/english/> Additionally, several churches in the diocese will live-stream their worship services, including the Philadelphia Episcopal Cathedral: <http://www.philadelphiacathedral.org> on Facebook and their website at 10 am. Locally, both St. Andrew's, Yardley (on Facebook) and St. Paul's, Doylestown (on youtube) stream their services. Or you might want to check out the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C. <https://cathedral.org>

Pastor Nancy ([rector@trinitybuckingham.org](mailto:rector@trinitybuckingham.org) and 443-752-9684) and Deacon Matthew ([matthew@trinitybuckingham.org](mailto:matthew@trinitybuckingham.org)) will continue to be available to you pastorally during this time. Do not hesitate to call, text or email. We will monitor the answering machine in the church office during the week. And of course, we hope that all of us will continue to be in touch with one another regularly via email, Facebook and phone calls.

To be clear, this closure includes not just Sunday morning, but all gatherings and meetings (with the exception of recovery groups, who will make their own decision about their meetings) associated with the church community, including Vestry meetings, Education for Ministry, Sacred Ground, the Fizz Bible Study, the Wednesday evening Lenten program, Sunday School and Faith Forums.

We will use these few weeks to develop more fully some ways of meeting virtually (Zoom, conference calls, etc.) for meetings, education, fellowship and worship should we need to extend our absence from Trinity's buildings.

These are unprecedented and stressful times, but as a song we sing at the Children of All Ages service reminds us: “The church is not a building, the church is not a steeple, the church is not a resting place, the church is a people” and as Jesus reminds his church—his people—“Be not afraid. I am with you always.”

In hope, faith and love,

The Rev. Dr. Nancy Burton Dilliplane, Rector and Mr. Marty Gillen, Rector’s Warden