



An Early June NEWSLETTER

From the Rector

Happy Pentecost! This Sunday is Trinity Sunday, and then we're in the long of green. Even though we are not worshipping together in the church, we continue to be church and I pray we'll keep green and growing!

Although many of you know this information from last Sunday, I want to continue to make every effort to keep you all informed on the latest developments. Last week, Governor Sununu extended the "stay-at-home" order for another two weeks, limited any social gatherings to no more than 10 people. However, he also announced that churches could open if they follow the 18 guidelines put out by the Center for Disease Control. They are quite extensive and detailed. Some of them:

- Those at higher risk of illness are advised to avoid group gatherings
- No more people than 40% of the building's capacity (St. David's is 150 meaning 60) but actual occupancy much lower in any one room because of social distancing.
- Everyone 6 feet apart including when entering and leaving
- Everyone wears a mask
- No shared cups, books of worship, bulletins, passing offering plates
- No handshakes, hugs etc.
- No coffee hour

In addition, to these guidelines, the guidelines from the bishop's office strongly discouraging group singing and no communion for now.

Bishop Rob has asked that all congregations (and AA meetings) not to meet during June but to use the month to discern carefully whether and how we will apply the guidance, and begin to make plans for the eventual and gradual re-introduction of in-person worship – with the understanding that this timeline may need to be extended. He also said that in the coming days, we will begin to determine in more detail the practicality of limited outdoor services, including weddings and funerals.

Our vestry will be doing this work, determining what it would look like for us to reinstate in-person worship, and then I think we as a congregation can talk about whether we would want to have indoor services right now given all the restrictions, or continuing our current zoom services until we can have things like communion, singing, and coffee hour. Do know that even when in-person worship resumes, we are committed to use the technology we have learned to keep those who might feel it is not safe for them to return to keep connected with the worship and life of the parish.

Feel free to call me with questions and concerns.

Take care and stay well!

Carolyn

Group worship

The zoom worship services have been going smoothly despite some sort of glitch or mistake every time! And they have been well attended, especially if you consider the number of people who cannot. Every Sunday we have between 28 and 31 households, making the full attendance around 40. This has consistently included 3-4 people who are living out of state or haven't attended for various reasons for many years. Pam and Kevin continue to provide music. A few weeks ago, Kevin had some slides of the church and members showing next to the words to the hymns as we sang. It was really impactful. But he has very few pictures and is asking for people to send pictures of yourself or the church or activities the church has done in the past, so that he can do this kind of thing again. Kevin's email is kwsmith442@gmail.com.

The last three weeks we have been unable to post video recordings of our services on Facebook. We're making every effort to figure out what the problem has been and resolve it! I do have recordings of the last few services and I can email them to you if you wish. Sorry!

Personal worship - Using the Daily Office

The Book of Common Prayer is an amazing resource for prayer. In addition to all kinds of prayers, there are formats for prayer and reading scripture for different times of the day, some shorter, some longer. Many churches are currently doing morning prayer for their Sunday worship service since we cannot have communion. As we often joke – there is more to the BCP than page 355! I'm thinking of offering a zoom workshop on using the BCP. Let me know if you are interested, and if you don't have a book of Common Prayer at home, swing by the church and pick one up.

The May, June, and July Day by Day devotional booklets (at least the small print ones) have come in. They'll be on the table in the hall by the front door. Feel free to drop in and pick one up.

Finances

All of you as members of this church have been amazing in your faithfulness of keeping up with your pledges! Thank you! With some AA groups continuing to send in monthly donations, a little income from the driving school, and a forgivable short term loan from the government to help cover payroll – we're currently holding our own.

Our outreach efforts continue!

Dave Hall Fund

The Fund has once again become very active! We are now providing birthday gifts each month to foster children in local group homes. In May, gift bags were given for two teenage girls for their birthdays stuffed with some clothes, make-up, and headphones. We were also contacted by the supervisor from DCYF to help provide some clothes and bedding for two teenage sisters who suddenly had to be placed in a home. We purchased sheets, pillows, and a \$100 gift card for each girl from Target. The Isaiah 58 Distribution Center was able to provide two twin sized quilts.

Bread of Life Food Pantry

Some members automatically have a certain amount of their pledge each month go to whatever the outreach is for that month. The vestry voted that those offerings for the spring months go to the food pantry at Triumphant Cross Church

Craft fair

At one of our zoom "coffee hours" we discussed our big September annual craft fair. The consensus was to hold off making a decision whether to go forward or to cancel until the end of July. In the meantime, each area (café, raffle, cookie walk, and crafter liaisons) were asked to envision what their area might look like to make the event as safe as possible for crafters, shoppers, and staff volunteers in the event that the state and town does allow large gatherings but with safety guidelines not unlike those that have come out for the church. Joanne and Lana are looking at fewer crafters both inside and outside with tents only on the perimeter of the parking lot to enable better social distancing. They are also contacting crafters. The folks doing cookies are thinking about pre-packaged containers or a clear plastic sheet hanging across the front of their tent. Signs will be ordered, but we're holding off making and soliciting raffle tickets and gift baskets. When we get into July, we'll also need to have members make a decision as to what they feel they can and cannot do. So, we're taking it one step at a time, recognizing that the fair may or may not happen, and if it does, the income is likely to be much less.

Diana Seifert's neck is fully healed and she no longer has a brace. In fact she is free to do what she wants, including golfing! She wants to thank everyone for their prayers, support, and food.

Prayers of lament and healing

This has been a difficult time for all of us. The Presiding Bishop has a special vigil of mourning for the 100,000 people in the United State who have died from Covid-19. And as I write this,

grief and rage is being expressed over the death of George Lloyd. We need to pray and work for racial healing and for peace. Let us offer up two prayers from our Book of Common Prayer:

“O God, you made us in your own image and redeemed us through Jesus your Son: look with compassion on the whole human family; take away the arrogance and hatred which infects our hearts; break down the walls that separate us; unite us in the bonds of love; and work through our struggle and confusion to accomplish your purposes on earth; that in your good time, all nations and races may serve you in harmony around your heavenly throne; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen” (Prayer for the Human Family p815 BCP)

“Look with pity, O heavenly Father, upon the people of this land who live with injustice, terror, disease, and death as their constant companions. Have mercy upon us. Help us to eliminate our cruelty to these our neighbors. Strengthen those who spend their lives establishing equal protection of the law and equal opportunities for all. And grant that every one of us may enjoy a fair portion of the riches of this land; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen” (Prayer for the Oppressed p.826)