

Dearly beloved,

How can we be separate yet together? Amidst the unknown, we know we have to be physically apart for this season to keep everyone healthy, regardless of age. We have not been more dependent on our interdependence than we are now. To help us practice this out of love for one another, we are doing the following in our Diocese:

1. Thanks to your dedicated lay and clergy leaders, we have moved our prayer services (morning or evening prayer) to go to alternative worship methods using the "church from home" model. These worshippers are physically engaging in worship alone, as households, or by joining an online community. We are in various stages of setting this mechanism up. Diocesan Council is making financial resources of up to [\\$300 per church](#) available to support congregations in obtaining the tools for online worship. Let us be patient with each other. At this time, we are going to follow the Center for Disease Control's direction and not meet for in-person worship in our churches through May 10th. This means our Renewal of Vows (for all), Holy Week and Easter services will be online. We are considering one common Easter liturgy for the entire Diocese online. Our leaders are revisiting the current arrangement constantly in this fluid situation. We don't know what the future holds and so we will take it one day at a time.

2. To facilitate staying connected during this time, I would like for us to have a weekly check-in opportunity for prayer, learning, and deliberation via ZOOM for an hour to see how we are doing. I welcome a priest, a warden, or another lay leader from every church, including current Substitute (Supply) Clergy, to join in this weekly meeting to be together as a Diocese. District Deans will set up opportunities for clergy to check-in with each other. Please look for an invite from our Communications guru, Steve, and make yourself available by phone or video. Steve can help you prepare for these meetings by guiding you.

3. As a sign of our baptismal solidarity, I invite you to pause a few times every day to do this fun and simple act wherever you are. Pick a song every day and sing away silently or aloud (20 seconds) as you wash your hands with soap—you can be mindful not to waste water. Singing, as you know, is praying twice!

- Sing this nice and easy! "Yes, Jesus loves me. Yes, Jesus loves you. Yes, Jesus loves us, The Bible tells me so."
- Sing this nice and easy! "Yes, we'll gather at the river, the beautiful the beautiful river. Gather with the saints at the river, that flows from the throne of God."
- Sing this like a gentle waltz! "A sunbeam, a sunbeam, Jesus wants me for a sunbeam. A sunbeam, a sunbeam. I'll be a sunbeam for him."
- Sing this at a nice clip! "This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine. This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine. This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine. Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine."
- Sing this nice and crisp! Praise God from whom all blessings flow, Praise God all creatures here below, Praise God above Ye heavenly hosts. Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

4. Finally, as you take care of yourself remember to check in with your neighbors by phone or some other safe way. Please make sure your church knows how to get in touch with you and vice versa.

While this virus has disrupted everything, it has also reminded us of Jesus' call to a healthy "infection" that we know as God's love. While COVID-19 separates us, nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. Let us, therefore, cling to Jesus, who is our glue during this time of separation while longing to be with each other in closer ways on the other side of this separating virus.

Let us be kind to ourselves, stay by ourselves, and take good care of each other!

The Lord be with you

And also with you.

Let us pray.

Gracious and Holy One. We pray for all medical and other first responders who give of themselves tirelessly during this time of intense need. Protect them from harm. Help them with rest and sound sleep when they are able to pause. Grant their loved one's patience and deep kindness to care for them when they are home.

Surround us all with a new spirit of generous curiosity that we may move more deeply into each other's lives and become your Beloved Community.

We also pray for all in authority to act out of thoughtful and humble selflessness.

In the name of the One who showed us how to love one another as he loved us. Amen!

With affection,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the name "Prince", written in a cursive style. The signature is positioned above a long, horizontal, slightly wavy line that extends across the width of the signature.

Prince