



March 13, 2020

Dear parishioners,

At St. Luke's Episcopal Church, the health and well-being of our congregation is of paramount importance. Our Presiding Bishop, The Most Reverend Michael Curry has just announced that all Episcopal church gatherings be suspended, effective immediately to help slow the spread of the pandemic.

Prior to this announcement, our vestry met and prayerfully processed what is transpiring, concerning the COVID-19 pandemic and how we are going to respond. In this present time, we need to reimagine how to be church, and model The Way of Love, as we serve each other and our communities as the living body of Christ.

Above all, we are here for each other. We are exploring how to be a strong church family, responsive within unprecedented circumstances. Right now, the most helpful thing each of us can do is slow the spread of infection. Practice good hygiene, reduce social gatherings and stay home if you are ill.

Since we cannot gather as we are accustomed, we will find new ways to stay connected. One fresh expression of being church is "St. Luke's Vines & Branches." We have formed new groups or "branches", each coordinated by a current vestry member. You will be contacted by your Vestry leader. Within each branch, please stay in daily touch with each other. FaceTime, texts, emails and even old-fashioned phone calls provide essential connection, and reduce isolation. Communicate closely any concerns or issues, especially if you need help or information. Share what you've been doing, how you are feeling, or if you are ill. We are all here to help one another. As we pull together, our relationships will become more deeply rooted. This connection is key to resilience and to physical, emotional and spiritual health.

All group activities within the church building are cancelled, including AI-Anon, AA, Yoga, Choir practice, Noon Refresher, etc. Melissa, our parish secretary will work from home. Only essential activities will be conducted in the building. We will clean and disinfect inside the building so that it will continue to be a safe harbor.

Outdoor activities will continue, such as gardening, mowing, etc. Already scheduled dinners, breakfasts, Dinner Theater, other meetings not in the building, will continue according to guidelines from those venues. In every circumstance, if you are

experiencing any cold or flu-like symptoms (fever, sore throat, coughing, shortness of breath), please stay home.

We will provide updates on ways we develop to worship and connect remotely. Continue to monitor the St Luke's website and Facebook. Also, I do not have email addresses for other members of your families, so please let them know what is happening. Better yet, ask if you can share their emails with us so that we can all stay better connected.

We are each called to be lay ministers of faith in the Episcopal Church. We will hold each other up in prayer, and be open to the promptings of the Holy Spirit to lead us through uncharted times. The Body of Christ is not reduced to where we go and what we do on Sunday. Together let's prayerfully and proactively re-imagine how to be church in new ways, for our congregation and our community.

Serving alongside you,  
In Christ's name,  
Fr. Jonathan Brice  
**970-987-1524**

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**St. Luke's Episcopal Church**  
**Shawnee, Kansas**