

March 20, 2020

*May the God of all hope
fill us with all joy and peace in believing
through the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

Dear Cathedral Community,

Last week as I sat in the sanctuary looking out over empty pews I had the strangest feeling though it wasn't as sad or lonely as I expected it to be. I was fortunate to have clergy and choir with me, and the Bishop was present, with his relaxed, welcoming, nature as well. Never the less you all were not there, where I could see you, and I missed you. Of course even when you are there, I never know what you are thinking, as you sit in the pews. Maybe you did follow that sermon point. Maybe you did find that anthem as moving as I did. Or maybe you are wondering whether you can still get a brunch reservation at Caet or Bravo. I don't know what is in your mind or heart, nor you mine, and yet we keep showing up for one another. We are faithful; we say our prayers together; we stand with one another. We can still do that now. We can show up on Facebook, in emails, in phone calls and most especially in prayer. We are still a Cathedral Community who shares one another's joys and sorrows. Keep showing up where you can and I will too.

For the last week, it feels that every time I have sat down to write you an email letter, things have changed before I can press send. Never the less I want you to know the changes that have been implemented in accordance with CDC guidelines and the Bishop's <http://standrews.ms/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/COVID-19-LetterToDioceseAffinityGps-320207393.pdf> pastoral direction as of this date.

We continue to prayerfully consider all liturgical options and opportunities for fellowship and formation. Whenever possible we are offering Zoom meetings, live stream services, Facebook and old fashion phone calls. Please know that you are always welcome to contact the clergy by calling 601-354-1535 and following the prompts. After office hours calls are directed to email. If it is an emergency, please email the clergy, and note that in your subject line.

It is not likely we can return to our building for worship before the Easter season begins. We are thinking creatively about how to plan Holy Week services that balance innovative use of social media and technology with the traditional grounding that Episcopalians hold dear. We will however have a fabulous Easter Sunday service the very first Sunday we are allowed back in our space altogether. In the meantime we continue to offer a live stream option at 10:00am with music, sermon, and a celebration of the Holy Eucharist. Noon day prayers with our prayer list begins on Monday. It will be available on our website <http://www.standrews.ms> and <http://www.facebook.com/yourcathedralinthecity>.

Weddings and funerals are limited. Funerals are graveside services only with a maximum of ten people. This is dictated by the City of Jackson, the CDC and our Bishop. While that necessitates no Eucharist, it does not mean it can't be a meaningful service with readings, eulogy, and added prayers. I strongly recommend that weddings be postponed as we can only have ten people at any one gathering and need to maintain physical distance from one another. You could get married at the Court House and have the Church bless your marriage at a later date when you can have all the fanfare you desire. We will happily put your wedding on the calendar (as long as it is after May 1st) but know that it is subject to change.

I know this is a confusing, anxious, time for many. Take care and stay home if possible. We will not be scheduling meetings at the Church until further notice but feel free to schedule a phone, zoom, or FaceTime meeting with any of us.

There are real financial and personal struggles with which to contend. God is faithful. God is good. God is gracious. May we, with all hope in believing, rely on that and continue to be gracious with one another.

In Christ,

Anne

The Very Reverend Anne M. Maxwell