

COVID-19 Updates: Diocesan House Closure

March 6, 2020

Dear Ones,

As we continue to monitor closely all that is happening with the COVID-19 outbreak in Seattle and the surrounding area, I am writing to update you on several changes to Diocesan House operations for the coming weeks. Seeking to comply with health department and CDC requests, I have chosen to close D-House for two weeks beginning this Monday. The office will remain closed to the public until Monday, March 23, and/or until we change that or make other plans. I made this decision after consultation with staff and health department requests, and in an effort to do all we can to protect you, our staff, and to aid in slowing down the spread of this virus. We do have several people on our staff in high-risk groups, so this will help protect them in their work, and protect any who might visit as well.

Please know that while we are closing the physical building that is D-House, the work of the diocese will continue. Other than planned, very large meetings, we intend to carry on with things as scheduled, doing most of this via Zoom or by phone. Appointments with any staff member that you have made over these next two weeks will be kept one of these ways. Any committee meetings we have scheduled will be kept this way. I will be keeping all my appointments, but as I said, we will do this virtually, not physically.

Most of you are aware the Presiding Bishop made the decision to change the upcoming House of Bishops meeting next week to a virtual meeting, and so I will be attending that, but I will be doing it from here. We also decided to cancel a large conference, Better Together, that we had scheduled for this weekend, and you can expect other large events that were planned to be cancelled as we get closer, unless the situation improves and health officials give us a green light on those larger gatherings. However, we will wait to the last possible moment to make those changes.

You will still be able to call into D-House during normal business hours, just as always. That number is 206-325-4200. You can call any staff member directly and you can also, of course, email. The work of the diocese will go on, so please do call or email if you need anything at all. I know so many of you are also making similar decisions where you are, and I know not everyone, or every ministry, will be able to take this action. However, we feel we can at this time, and we feel we can continue our work while we do.

Meanwhile, I pray for all of you, for our diocese, for our church, and for all in our community, and I offer those prayers with great hope. We can and will get through this. Our actions now are not taken out of fear, but out of the common good, and a hope of being part of the solution, and not part of the problem. Let us be about our work, in a new way.

Blessings,

+Greg

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