

March 18, 2020

Dear All,

Of course by now we are all settling into a "new normal" of sorts that none of would have chosen for our world. It is in times like these that our faith is called into its fullest action as we seek to love God and love our neighbors. My hope is that in the days, weeks, and months to come, we continue our resolve at St. Matthew to be a church that passionately embraces and values all people as we grow in the love of Christ through word and action.

Tonight, I'm writing to you to cover a few topics that will be hard to convey with any sort of depth in our regular weekly email. Here are the topics:

1. I believe it is vitally important that **we all** model a "Shelter in Place" mode of operating at this time. With the Bay Area and New York City this week mandating "Shelter in Place", it is very likely our region will do the same in the near future. Even if it does not happen, we must remember that the virus survives and multiplies via people. The more people move about and are around other people, the more the virus stays active. The faster we move to Sheltering in Place, the faster this period of time will pass. Because of this, I have decided to do all liturgies online from my home until further notice in order to encourage people to stay put. I will have more to say about Holy Week and Easter at another time as ideas are being developed and thought through.
2. Pam Halsan's Burial Liturgy on April 11th is postponed pending the resumption of physical gathering. This was a decision from the family and I was glad that they are synchronized with our trajectory at St. Matthew.
3. Bob Witter's death yesterday is hard for many of you and it is hard for me too. Not having our normal methods and modes for grieving at this time is surreal to say the least. Now more than ever I think it is really important as time goes on to connect with each other about our feelings and to share our stories with each other. Grief is going to be a significant theme over this period of time. Being open and sharing as much as we can in love will be key. Please know I am available 24 hours/7 days a week to talk and connect. I am here to listen and to share. Call or text me at 253-224-7554; FaceTime me; Email me at fatherkendall@gmail.com; Facebook message me - I am here. Setting up a Zoom account at www.zoom.us for yourself is also going to be imperative. As time goes on, having a meeting/gathering platform that provides the closest thing to live interaction electronically will become increasingly important for our mental health and overall vitality. If you are having trouble with Zoom, call me and I'll walk you through the steps.
4. As an expansion of the above topic, I am in the process of developing Buddy Groups for the parish. This entails breaking up our directory into smaller groups of about 5 households per group. Each group will have a "Captain Household" whose duty will be to call the other households in the group to check in on a daily basis. The "Captain Households" would then report back to me once or twice a week any issues people might have that need some troubleshooting or extra pastoral attention. I am also developing a "Shelter in Place" resource page on our website that will list fun and prayerful things for adults and kids to do while staying at home. Lots of you have forwarded me some great ideas and this will be a place to post them. Please keep your ideas coming!
5. It will be extremely important to keep up your pledge as best as possible and to consider giving a bit extra to cover folks who are undoubtedly going to be severely impacted financially at this time. St. Matthew is already becoming an increasingly needed place of refuge, hope, and love for our neighborhood and beyond. Making sure we keep the ministry going ensures our mission will not only

survive this time but thrive when people need us the most. Pledges can be made online via our website at https://www.eservicepayments.com/cgi-bin/Vanco_ver3.vps?appver3=Fi1giPL8kwX_Oe1A050jRnlw3bH_5FSM8Yh8VOUxzY5E0VZpPcIw91FrYieK2rA42EvVVAEjqawDomKT1pbouV4bqXbJoV74CVBHD53fMmY=&ver=3 or by mailing them directly to the church. I am working on activating a "Donate Button" on Facebook as well.

6. After over a week and a half of personal discernment, I have decided in consultation with our bishop, our wardens, and our Clergy Parish Renewal team to postpone my Sabbatical until 2021. As this crisis has developed, it is increasingly clear that stability and consistency are the most important things we can engage in for our spiritual, mental, and emotional well being. I am committed to each of you with my very life and am here to walk with you through this time every step of the way for as long as it takes.

7. Finally, pray. Pray like you've never prayed before. Pray by yourselves. Pray over the phone with your friends. Pray formal prayers from resources like the Book of Common Prayer. Pray with words that just pop into your head. Pray in silence. Pray with music. Pray for the world. Pray for yourselves. Pray for those whom you know. Pray for the stranger. Whatever you do, just pray. Prayer is not a means of solving problems, but rather the way of communicating with the One who guarantees to be with us in our problems (and our joys, and our everything). Whether we feel God's presence or not, we are never alone. This is the singular revelation of Jesus and it is God's Real Presence that we celebrate every time we gather to literally give our sacred thanks, which is the meaning of the phrase Holy Eucharist. Now is the time to put our practiced faith into action and be the prayerful people God has called to be.

Thank you for receiving this fairly long letter in the midst of so much information sharing. I love you all and am glad we are in this together.

Peace to you,

Kendall+

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