MESSAGE FROM THE RECTOR:

A Global Pandemic vs. A Gospel Reassurance

This past month, our society experienced a whirlwind of events and emotions. It began with rumors of a dangerous virus from another country which quickly evolved into a global pandemic. The result has been a worldwide shut down of almost everything we know as normal, including a shortage of toilet paper like we have never seen.

It has been a weird few weeks for me as well. I cannot remember the last time I was not up early headed to church on a Sunday morning to worship with the people of God and proclaim the good news. Now, by way of a camera, I must speak to you at home in your living rooms while we practice “social distancing.” Strange indeed, but I have been prayerful to ask the Lord what He has in store for us during this stressful moment in history. Can the church be the church without gathering? Without the building? Without Easter morning?

The answer to these questions is a resounding YES! While we wish to be together in our nave to celebrate the resurrection of our Lord, we read in the book of Acts where the church met in homes and in small gatherings. The church will always be the church, no matter where we are or where we gather, even in difficult circumstances. The author of Hebrews encourages us to “not forsake meeting together,” and I encourage you to do the same during this challenging time.

While we may not be able to gather in groups larger than our own families, there is much we can do during this pandemic. First, rest assured that God has not left His throne, nor has He lost control of things. The Gospel reassures us that we serve a God who sees the big picture even when we cannot. God, in His infinite wisdom and mercy, uses crises in history to draw His people to Himself taking our eyes off of the world and fixing them upon Him alone. Now is the time to, “Turn your eyes upon Jesus. Look full in His wonderful face. And the things of earth will grow strangely dim in light of His glory and grace.”

Second, history shows that in times of crisis people seek answers. The harvest is plentiful, and our call is to be laborers in the field. Whether this “field” is to the grocery store cashier, who hasn’t had a day off since all this started, or the neighbor who has been forced to stay at home, in spite of today’s difficult circumstances, we still have good news to share. There is no better time than now to engage in spiritual conversation because people are seeking answers, and they are willing to listen. (Continued inside...)
FROM THE Rt. REV. KEE SLOAN

Excerpts from March 23, 2020 extending suspension of in-person worship:

• As a precaution to help stop the spread of COVID-19, the suspension of face-to-face worship has been extended through the month of April.
• Everything on the calendar after May 1st, remains on the calendar for now, but will be subject to change/cancellation as updates occur on the spread of this virus.
• While we can’t continue “business as usual,” many parishes are sharing what they’re doing on our diocesan website under “COVID-19 – Announcements & Resources.” There are online services and suggestions, resources for Christian Formation for children of all ages, and more.
• Morning Prayer is now offered on Sundays on the diocesan Facebook page and their website. (Holy Cross is also offering Morning Prayer Sunday service on our website).
• Plans are underway for an online Easter Vigil service and an online diocesan “Stations of the Cross” service.
• Bishop Kee closes his message by encouraging us to look out for each other, stay healthy and safe, take advantages of online worship opportunities, and continue to support our parishes financially.

I pray you all stay healthy and safe, and I look forward to when we can gather together again to experience the joy and love of Christ.

Blessings,

Father Wes

(continued from front page...) Finally, the church family is reminded to remain a family. Even though we cannot meet together at Holy Cross, we have other means of keeping in touch. In the early 1900’s when a flu pandemic hit, there were no online worship options, virtual meetings, and even the telephone was still very primitive. Still, that generation survived and came back strong after their pandemic. We, too, will come back strong, and likely stronger, thanks to what is at our fingertips. During this time, let me encourage you to take advantage of our online worship, streaming of hymns and praise songs, and also the telephone. Reach out and engage with one another, Holy Crossers, with the scriptures for the week, say a prayer for one another, and certainly speak words of encouragement. The Lord can do a great work even though we are absent from the church building!

what’s HAPPENING?

TENTH ANNUAL BIBLE READING MARATHON:
(81 continuous hours of Bible reading from Genesis to Revelation) will take place Thursday, May 7th beginning at 8:00am and continue through Sunday, May 10th at 5:30pm at the Veterans’ Memorial in the Trussville Civitan Park. People of all ages are welcome to sign up to read. Readings will be in 15-minute increments. Individuals may sign up for one or two increments or a group may sign up for a block of time. A large print Bible (NIV) will be available; however, readers are invited to read from their own Bible and in their native language. If you would like to schedule a time to read, go to our website and click the Bible Reading Marathon Sign Up link. Fr. Wes will also be signing up Holy Cross for a block of time and details will be forthcoming.

ONLINE GIVING OF PLEDGES, OFFERINGS, ETC.
Bishop Kee ended his March 23, 2020 address to the Alabama diocese encouraging everyone to continue financial support of their parishes. It is certainly a financially trying time, and we would not add a burden to those of you who are currently without a paycheck. But for those of you who can continue to support the needs of our church, there are multiple ways to give. Please visit our holycrosstrussville.org and click on the blue “GIVE” button in the right hand corner to find out all the ways to support the church during this time.

TEAM WILL REOPEN ON MARCH 30, 2020
The Board chose to close for two weeks to develop and implement processes for responding to the needs of the community and the safety of clients and volunteers. When we re-open, we will continue to provide food to clients, but we are not accepting clothing and will not give clothing to clients due to space and distance requirements. Contact Courtney Dollar @ cldollar@gmail.com if you have any questions.

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