



ALL SAINTS' EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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March 21, 2020

My Dear Friends:

I am grateful to have arrived back in Florida last night, and I am now home in my apartment in Stuart. This will be a very lengthy letter, but I hope you will read all of it since it's important that we keep up-to-date on what's happening with us as a faith community at All Saints.

Originally, I was to return today, but after learning that the US State Department advised all Americans to return home as soon as possible or face staying in the country in which one is in currently for an indefinite period of time, I felt that it was imperative that I return home, without delay, even from the country of my birth. Obviously, it was a whirlwind trying to get everything completed but I hope I have succeeded in doing so.

The Funeral and Burial of my "second Mom"

The Funeral Eucharist and Burial of my beloved "second Mom", Marjorie Viola Butcher, went very well. Her Eucharist was presided over by the Anglican Bishop of Barbados, and was well attended by many clergy, family members, friends, and colleagues, including the Head of State (the Governor General). It took place on Saturday, March 14, at Holy Trinity Anglican Church in Barbados, where she attended for 30 years and served as Senior Warden for 14 of those years. She was interred in the Churchyard of St. Mark's Anglican, the church she attended most of her life. I was honored to be the preacher at the service and to officiate at the Interment at the graveside. I want to thank all of you for your love, prayers, support, words of condolence, during this very difficult time in my life and that of my family. Please continue to pray for us. A few pictures of the service will be in a separate email.

The COVID-19 Coronavirus and Rector's Quarantine

In speaking with the Senior Warden, Paul Neff, and with other members of the Vestry as well as my own family, I was told that I was returning to a country that was very different from the one I left two weeks ago. They were absolutely correct. The world is not the same as I began to see glimpses of it while I was in Barbados. This change in our world, as a result of the COVID-19 coronavirus, is testing the faith of many in our country and the world as the number of persons affected, and have died, increase on an hourly basis. Therefore, our primary task as Christians, Americans, and as people in general, at this time, is to do all we can to control the spread of this pandemic and to ensure the well-being of all people.

This brings me to my own situation. On Thursday night (March 19) when I spoke with Bishop Eaton, he informed me that I have to be in isolation (a self-imposed quarantine) for 2 weeks, ending April 3. What a bummer! This means that on arrival in Miami, I had to head straight to my apartment in Stuart, and remain there for that period of time, having no in-person contact with individuals. I will be able to work from at

The Reverend Anthony B. Holder, D. Min., *Rector*
The Reverend Alan Gellert, *Deacon*

home and to speak on the phone or through Zoom. This means that I will only be able to officiate at the virtual services from April 5 (Palm Sunday). As much as this is very disappointing to me, I would not want to expose any of you to the possibility of catching this virus.

Bishop's second Pastoral Letter in light of COVID-19

Bishop Eaton issued a second pastoral letter on Thursday, March 19, with reference to the Coronavirus and its continued effect on us as a local faith community and the Church in Southeast Florida as a whole. In the letter, the following points were outlined:

1. **All churches, schools, and special ministries, will remain closed for in-person services, meetings and other activities or gatherings until Wednesday, April 15**, whether such gatherings are inside or outside of our buildings. This means, as it stands right now, there will be no in-person services during Holy Week and on Easter Day. The situation will be closely monitored and if it's possible to reopen our churches before that date, then we will, however, there could be further extensions of closure, if needed.
2. **Churches may continue to have worship through live streaming or recording**, and to post these recordings on their church's social media outlets. However, such recordings shall have a gathering of no more than 3 persons and a maximum of 4.
3. **The Church Office and the Thrift Shop are to remain closed** and staff are to work from home. At All Saints', we have been in the process of forwarding all calls to the church to the cell phone of our Office Manager, Jenny McDonald.
4. **Meetings** may take place via conference calls, Zoom communications, or any other electronic programs or devices.
5. **The Sacrament of Baptism** as a public worship act (mostly administered during Sunday morning Eucharist) has been lifted and is to be done only in cases of emergency. In such cases, no more than 5 persons are to be present, namely, the priest, candidate, and parents. Godparents and/or sponsors are not to be present. As soon as possible after the recommencement of in-person worship, the baptized person is to be welcomed into the church and Godparents can be present on that occasion.
6. No further **weddings** are to be scheduled for summer this year until in-person worship recommences. However, weddings for later in the year or next year can be reserved. If there has been a previously scheduled wedding that must be solemnized, then only 5 persons (the priest, the couple, and two witnesses), the required number for the solemnization of a marriage, are to attend.
7. **Funerals** are not to be scheduled during the closure of churches, but if they need to take place, they are to be done at the graveside with the number of persons present as specified by the US government. When in-person worship resumes, Funeral/Requiem Masses or memorial services are encouraged for those whose graveside services took place during this time.
8. During this period, there will be **no services of Holy Confirmation, Receptions or Reaffirmation of Baptismal Vows.**

Since we are unable to have in-person public worship on Easter Sunday (April 12), the Bishop has given permission for our faith communities to celebrate the full feast of Easter on the first Sunday we are able to have public worship again. This will include the lighting of the new fire, and the blessing and lighting of the Paschal Candle. We can, however, still have the celebration of the Eucharist on Easter Sunday via a virtual service.

Virtual Services

At All Saints', we will be livestreaming and recording our services virtually from this coming Sunday, March 22. The service will begin at 10.00 a.m. Father Steve Frigeau will celebrate the Eucharist on March 22 and 29. Since, the Bishop has authorized a maximum of 4 persons to attend these services, there will be one person who will read the lessons, Prayers of the People, and assist at the altar; a person who will livestream the service; the Senior Warden who will make announcements on my behalf, and Father Frigeau.

A link has already been placed on our church's web site, which will take you directly to the live stream on our YouTube page, and to the Bulletin or Order of Service for Sunday, March 22. We will also be posting information on our Facebook page as to how persons can access our live stream videos. Please share the information with your Facebook friends so that they can be a part of the service. You may also invite them to like our church's Facebook page and to subscribe to our YouTube page. It would be a devotional and spiritual time for persons whose churches are closed and are unable to engage in virtual services.

Please note that the link to the Bulletin for March 22 has been prepared so that you can fully participate in the service. For easy viewing and participation, you may want to download and view the Bulletin/Order of Service on your cell/smart phones and to watch and listen to the service on your computer. Just a suggestion.

Holy Week and Easter Day Services

As I mentioned earlier, since the Bishop has extended the closure of churches until April 15, there will be no in-person public worship during Holy Week or on Easter Sunday. Instead, we will be holding virtual services throughout Holy Week, beginning on Palm Sunday. I have not decided on all the times and services for Holy Week since we are only been told of this new development on Thursday. I will provide a schedule of Holy Week and Easter Day services in a separate communication as the time draws closer.

Financial Contributions

In light of the closure of our church buildings, the isolation from persons, and the whole effect that COVID-19 is having on our communities, our country and the world, you may not be thinking about your weekly or monthly financial contribution to the church. It may be a tiny aspect in the whole picture of our lives today. But it's important that you continue to make our offering or pledge to the church, provided you are fiscally able.

You will be surprised how quickly, after just a few Sundays of no offerings, how financially impecunious a church can become. We would not want that to happen to All Saints'. Although our buildings are closed, bills and salaries still need to be paid, but even more importantly our ministry commitments still continue especially at a time like this when people need our assistance.

You may therefore ask, "How can we do this since the church is closed?" I would like to offer a few suggestions:

1. You may want to consider online giving options, and if you desire to do so, you can either go to our church's website: www.allsaintsjensenbeach.org and click on Giving at the top of the Home page, OR you may click on the following link: <http://www.allsaintsjensenbeach.org/giving/>

and it will take you directly to the page.

2. You may want to sign up for automatic withdrawal, where your pledge or offering can be taken directly from your bank account at a specified time. This can also be done through the Online Giving link on our church's web site.

3. You may simply mail in your check to the church's address at:

All Saints' Episcopal Church
2303 NE Seaview Drive
Jensen Beach, FL 34957

Attention: William Winsemann

For more information on any of these options, you may contact our Treasurer, Bill Winsemann, at: 407.325.9028 (Mobile) or wwinsemann@gmail.com (E-mail) or Pam Hurd, our Assistant Treasurer, at: 772.486.2129 (Mobile) or pamhurd@gmail.com (E-mail).

My Thoughts

We have never seen the lights of anything like this, at least not during my lifetime. When I arrived at the Miami Airport last night the parking garage was virtually empty of vehicles. I likened it to a “ghost town.” Traffic on the streets and highways from the airport to Jensen Beach were at a minimal. In fact, the Miami/Fort Lauderdale area and its suburbs looked like the Treasure Coast community in many respects. I could not believe it, for I have never seen the Miami/Fort Lauderdale area looking like this, maybe with the exception of Hurricane Irma in 2017. But as I drove, although there was sadness in leaving Barbados, I had an inner peace because I was on my way home. Even though I knew I was going to be in isolation, I was happy to be going to my apartment and area which I love. I knew I was going to be among church family and friends, even if not communally for a time, who love me and who I love. I knew that persons, on hearing that I am in isolation, will be reaching out to me, to get me what I needed. I also knew that God is very much present with us, maybe even more than we know if we would only recognize His presence.

We are charting new territory, my friends. There are many who are fearful and stressed by the current situation, but I am a firm believer that out of every bad situation something good comes out of it; in every disappointment, there is a blessing in disguise. We need to experience that good, that blessing in the midst of this time of doubt and uncertainty. We need to be the light to others in this time of darkness. This is why I think it is important to check in on your neighbors, including our church family. Make a phone call to the elderly or to the person who is ill; send text messages to your grandchildren and tell them you love them and if they text you back, let them know they will get something special for their birthday or for Christmas. Send a note to the friend across the states that you have not heard in a while because you have been too busy. Buy some groceries for the person who is unable to get to the store. This time is a wonderful opportunity to truly live and be the way the Church is called to be.

Remember, our church buildings are closed, but the church is not; for we, the people, are the church. We are still one body even when we are not meeting together in person. But we are connected in spirit and can love and care for the spiritual needs of one another.

Also realize that this time of isolation and shutdown of our lives can also be a gift...a time to recharge ourselves spiritually. As one of you said to me last night, use this time of isolation to pray and to chart a vision of what you think God would like our church to be. And so, I say to you, use this time like a sabbath, a time to rest, not having to deal with the hustle and bustle of life; a time to be still and to know God is in the midst of all that is going on; a time to renew yourselves in your relationships to God and each other; a time to pray for one another; a time to thank God for the many blessings He has given us, particularly life itself; a time to just do anything – watch movies (nice ones of course), listen to music, play a game, share conversations among each other; be creative; or just simply get some much deserved sleep. But whatever you do, enjoy this time. Thank God...and not be frustrated. There are lessons to be learned from all of this. Take time to find out what those lessons are.

Should any of you like to send me a text message or email, call me, or would like me to pray with you, my contact information is 954.882.1838 (Mobile) or fatherTony@allsaintsjensenbeach.org (E-mail). I would be happy to hear from you and to respond as well.

With God's grace and through love, prayer, patience, and goodwill, this current situation shall pass, and hopefully we would have grown for the better as a result of it.

You remain in my thoughts, prayers and heart. With love and blessings!

Your Friend and Pastor,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anthony" followed by a small cross symbol.

Father Tony