

ST. BARNABAS CHURCH HUNKER-DOWN-HOME PARTY LINE PRESS

Vol 7

3/23/2020

Worship together on-line each Sunday via ZOOM!

We had our first video-conference Eucharist yesterday, and it worked so well that we could even have other folks than Laura+ do readings, and Michael concelebrated with L+. What a thrill and a blessing to be connected to you in this way to worship and share the sacrament. We will do this as long as we have to stay isolated from one another during the coronavirus. This opens up the possibility to continue our classes and meetings on-line, rather than cancel them.

ZOOM is free for gatherings up to 100 people and for no longer than 40 minutes at a time. You can download the application and set up discussion groups or social gatherings this way, and the fun is you get to see each other as well as hear each other. Try it and let me know how it is working for you!

STAY CONNECTED AND SHARE THE LOVE (safely)!



[Click to enlarge](#)



MARCH 20₂₀₂₀

Bishop's Letter to the Diocese

Click here: [Bishop's Statement](#)

My friends in the Diocese of San Diego,

These are frightening times. The State of California is now under a mandatory stay-at-home order from the governor. With the exception of going out for necessities – groceries, banks, health care, gas stations, laundromat – everyone is ordered to stay at home to prevent the spread of a disease that could kill many Americans and overwhelm our health care system.

I have been in conversation with Dr. Cheryl Anderson, an Episcopal public health expert who is Professor and Interim Chair of the Department of Family Medicine and Public Health at the UC San Diego School of Medicine. Dr. Anderson, a member of St. Peter's Del Mar, is deeply involved in the response to this crisis and very aware of its dangers. Under strong advice from her and from our chancellor, I have concluded that our congregations must follow the governor's order, not only to obey the law, but also to do our part to protect our communities from a public health catastrophe.

This means that our worship will change. Many of our churches have been live-streaming worship from our church buildings, and have found that online worship provides great new opportunities to reach people we've never reached before. I know that it's comforting to see worship in your familiar church building, even if only a few people are present.

But I believe the governor's order changes our ability to worship from our church buildings. While we might argue that only a few people are present in live-streamed worship, I would say that we offer a better witness to our frightened, anxious world by staying home as we have been asked to do, and live-streaming worship from our homes. I have asked your clergy to support the health of our communities, obey the governor's order, and find new ways to lead worship at home. This is our time to demonstrate our love for our neighbors in word and action, as Jesus commanded us to do. This is our way to come alongside the world in its suffering and anxiety during this pandemic.

This does not mean that you cannot worship. Some of our congregations will live-stream worship online, it will just be from your clergy's homes rather than from the church building. Some will help you find other nearby congregations whose worship you can join online. Some will be providing worship services on paper or by email so that you can pray them at home. In the weeks to come, our diocese will be sharing a number of ways to worship with you.

I ask you to do all in your power to continue praying, worshiping, and caring for others from your home. This is a time to find new ways to connect with others from your church and from your neighborhood. Find ways to share the power of Jesus' love with others. Find ways to support others who are alone and suffering. Our actions during this time as Christians will be a witness to the power of God's love, that we are willing to enter this fast from worshiping in our beloved ways for the sake of the wider world. And if legal restrictions are lifted, or we get other information, I will change our guidance in the Diocese of San Diego.

This letter comes with great anguish that I know you all share, my sisters and brothers. None of us imagined that we would find ourselves in a place like this. And yet here we are. And I believe that the church has a vital witness to share, about how our love of our neighbors is so strong that we dare to discover new ways to worship our God and care for our neighbors. The Son of God, our Savior Jesus Christ, gave us the commandment to love each other as he loved us. I believe our love will shine through this crisis and bring hope to our world. And, as has happened in many



trials throughout the church's history, I believe this new trial will strengthen our church's witness to the Lord of Life. As Paul says in the Letter to the Romans:

For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 8:38-39

It is true that these are frightening times, but we are courageous people. Let us courageously share the love of Christ in our time.

In Christ,

The Rt. Rev. Susan Brown Snook

“Love in the Time of Coronavirus” from POSTS BY CHRISTIAN GILLETTE:

In times of stress and trial, it is tempting to allow our instinct for survival to kick in.

Do I have enough food?

Do I have enough supplies?

Will I have enough resources to last until...?

Of course, our instinct to survive is a natural response and can be helpful in times like these. We follow directions to practice good hygiene, we socially distance from our friends and family, and we make sure we have what we need for a long stay indoors; however, when we actually *do* have enough, this instinct to survive can take on a less helpful form, increasing fear in the name of self-preservation.

Fear is also a natural response to crisis, and we must allow for its presence with a sense of compassion – the situation we are all facing is unprecedented and unknown. Many of us have a legitimate fear for loved ones, friends and neighbors, and legitimate worry over the impact on our economy and government. But of what

benefit is it to us or to the world, if we surrender to fear, and close our hearts off in the midst of crisis? This only leads to disconnection and throws us into a hellish reality of neighbor against neighbor.

Our calling as people of God is much greater. We are called to be people of love and compassion, *especially* in times of trial and suffering. This is the example Christ gave us during his life on earth – He aligned himself with God in such a way that he could perfectly face the trials of life while exemplifying the virtues of peace, love, charity, compassion even to those who ultimately killed him.

Compassion is the mode in which we are able to reach out to those around us – to those outside our homes, outside our families, beyond our neighborhoods, beyond our borders and even beyond our categories – to all beings everywhere, recognizing each as a unique creation. *When we show compassion, we reflect the image of God who is the very essence of compassion and the source of all life and love.*

In these days of uncertainty, fear may be present with us and that's ok. But instead of remaining in fear can we also awaken compassion in our hearts and continue to open ourselves to our neighbors? Who is our neighbor? What does it mean to love our neighbor? How can we be loving and generous to those in need, *especially in these times in which when we are unable to be physically present?* These are questions we must all ponder in the coming days, weeks and months.

My prayer is that we would continue to find new and creative ways to show love to our neighbors in these uncertain times. May we give hope to the hopeless, show compassion to the vulnerable, and overflow with generosity to those in need.

By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another. John 13:35

There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear... 1 John 4:18

Thank you to Plekons and Margaret Liggett for the gift of this cross.

It will go in the niche on the left side of the altar and above the communion “stack.” That way it will be seen by everyone no matter where they are seated in the church. We used to have a cross on the wall next to the ambo (where the readers do the lessons), but it was very small. This will be a lovely and inspirational addition to our beautiful church.

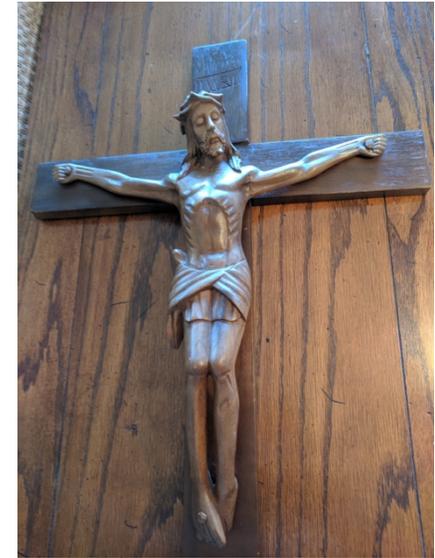
Faith, faith communities and the Corona virus, part two

By Michael Plekon

Beyond online texts and services, there are things our Christian tradition has always taught that resound even more importantly now, when there is a great deal of fear about the unknown that lies ahead. It is certain that as testing becomes more widespread, the number of positive tests for the virus will rise dramatically. This has been the case now for more than a week. Also the number of those seriously affected, hospitalized and indeed, the number who will die from the virus—all will increase. This is not a matter of exaggeration, hoax or “the sky is falling.” It is also not a scare tactic. It is fact. And as Jesus said in so many ways, we have to have our eyes wide open to the world and reality around us, let our “yes” be “yes” our “no” be “no.” We are living in the most serious threat to health in our lifetimes. More so than any Depression or war. It is a matter of life and death.

Our scriptures, God speaking to us, tell us that we are always moving toward death, that even “in the midst of life, we are in death.” (BCP. 492) This line appears in funeral services. Why? Because it is a truth of the human condition. It appears in all the world faith traditions and their writings. Some shrink from any mention of death. The traditions recognize the fear behind this but also the folly. The Hebrew Bible tells us that “love is stronger than death.” God is the “God of the Living,” Jesus said. The Easter cry was always the greeting of great saints like Seraphim of Sarov and Teresa of Avila: Christ is risen.

Here we have something to celebrate and more importantly to live out at home. We try to socially distance ourselves from others, to stay home, in order to protect the health of all and keep the number of cases of virus lower, so that medical professionals and hospitals can adequately treat the ill. In practice, hunkering down at home can mean catching up on reading, on TV series and film. It also can mean actively checking in with



friends and family near as well as far, by email, phone, text, Skype, Zoom or other video chatting apps. This Sunday, March 22, a Eucharist was celebrated by almost 20 or more of the people of St. Barnabas on Zoom. The link to this application as well as the meeting ID and password will be posted again close to next Sunday's celebration. We listened to the scriptures, to a short sermon. We prayed for all in this time of the virus, gave thanks, shared the bread and cup in our homes, on the altar of our tables.

Staying home is not just cooking, catching up on books, binge watching series. It is also time for "the works of love," as Kierkegaard called them. Many have found themselves drawn to reach out by phone, email, text to relatives and friends near and far, to people we see a great deal as well as those with whom we have not talked in a long time. The vestry and the clergy are reaching out as are all of us. We have the Hunker down party line newsletter sent out several times a week. It is reassuring to share our uncertainty, to listen to others' fears and hopes, to simply be in communion with one another. Services in churches are cancelled. However we are all rediscovering the community we share and we need.

We do not know how long we will be trying to avoid the spread of Covid-19. But as before its appearance, we will be getting up each day and going through any number of activities. We may be getting out for exercise, also to get groceries, medications,. We will be making meals, reading, maybe meditating, praying, and keeping in touch. Many of the places where folks volunteered and prayed are closed. But the world is not closed, our sisters and brothers, our neighbors are still here. It is still possible to find meaning and peace in the ordinary, in the course of the day that is most routine. Monks, Buddhist and Christian, great teachers and spiritual guides have always recommended quiet and routine as effective ways of being aware, of enabling us to get outside our active brains, our worry, anxiety, despair. There are many figures who offer us insight, from Thomas Merton to Richard Rohr, and Lev Gillet had in common the combination of a reflective life as well as a life of active concern for the neighbor.

Our faith reminds us we are never just by ourselves, even if practicing "social distancing." The heart knows no distance from another heart. Jesus said he is wherever two or three are gathered in his name. St. Irenaeus of Lyons said in the 3rd century, "Where the Spirit is, there is the church and all grace." And an ancient prayer of the church says that the Spirit is everywhere, filling all things. The Spirit, as Laura said in the Zoom Eucharist, cannot be bound by walls or any other barriers or by distance. We are part of each other and the pandemic does not alter that a bit. Let us keep in touch, offer to help where it is needed. This is living what we believe. Peace and all good.