

Dear People of All Saints,

Your All Saints leadership has been watching the continuing coverage about COVID-19 and making plans to be as cautious as possible. Earlier this week, that meant some changes to how we do things in worship. However, with the quickly changing landscape of this pandemic, and out of an abundance of caution, the All Saints council and I have decided to cancel worship for this Sunday, March 15, and Wednesday evening, March 18. We will continue to watch and pray next week and make decisions about worship a week at a time.

In her message about the COVID-19 pandemic on Thursday, the Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton, presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), said that even though "this is a time of disruption. It is also a time to live and act as faithful people of God." "Circumstances now are forcing a change in our behavior," said Eaton. "But let's see this as an opportunity for us to pause and reflect, to breathe, and to think about what it means to be the body of Christ. How do we stay connected when gathering is discouraged? How do we care for our neighbor?"

Even though we will not gather in person on Sunday, we continue to be the church – the body of Christ. I invite you to join me on Facebook for a brief online worship Sunday morning – I will go “live” on the All Saints Facebook page at 9:00 a.m. Sunday morning. Grab your phone or computer, light a candle if you wish, and join me live, or find the video later at a time that works better for you. We continue to worship and praise our God who provides water from a rock and fills us with living water. If you would like to come prepared, I invite you to read Sunday’s lessons in advance: Exodus 17:1-7, Romans 5:1-11, and John 4:5-42.

In addition, I encourage you to continue to be the body of Christ in slightly modified ways. As one message I saw this week proclaimed, “Let your smiles be contagious today, not your handshakes.” Let our love for one another be contagious, even as we are physically distant from one another. Call to check in on those folks you would normally talk to on Sunday mornings. Offer to help in ways that you can. And trust in God to walk us through this.

Another quote that spoke to me today was from Rev. Jacqui Lewis, PhD, who wrote, “It’s scary to watch everything getting canceled – to see empty streets or watch Broadway go dark. But these are really signs of hope: People making tough and painful decisions to reduce viral transmissions. Right now, love looks like an empty stadium.” And I would add – love looks like an empty sanctuary. It was not an easy decision to cancel worship, but we trust that God is present with us in all that life brings, and will rejoice when we are able to meet again face to face.

I leave you with this article that I also found helpful today, “Five Ways to be the Church When Church is Canceled”: https://www.patheos.com/blogs/irreverin/2020/03/how-to-keep-being-church-when-church-is-canceled/?utm_source=Newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Best+of+Patheos&utm_content=57&fbclid=IwAR3ShSAdrOFxAXGN0_NFS0cd6UD9vlyABooCfjJT5LOh-6Ned9fdilhgRk

God’s peace,
Pastor Kristin