

**A Special Guidance from Bishop Doyle related to the COVID-19 Disease Management and Our
Response here at
Good Shepherd Episcopal Church, Friendswood**

This afternoon, Friday, we received an emergency guidance letter from Bishop Andy. He is asking that, effective immediately, all gatherings of the congregations of the Diocese of Texas be suspended for at least the next two weeks or until we receive further guidance. Though this may seem extreme, it is in accord with the best advice that he has received from local Public Health Leadership and the best science to be applied in stemming the spread of this disease. Clearly, many who are served in our congregations are among the most vulnerable. The goal now is the containment of the disease and the slowing of its spread to these, the most physically fragile among us. In the face of the symptoms of COVID-19 It is life threatening to the fragile and elderly. Our work as Christians is always to care for each other, in this case to do all that we can to "flatten the curve" of growth of this very contagious, potentially fatal disease. Though it was, I'm sure, a difficult decision, as I read the Bishop's letter, it is the one that shows the most basic, Christian Love for our brothers and sisters.

Our God remains ever-present to us and we can worship God, through Jesus in the power of the Pentecost Spirit in many, many ways. Making these sacrifices is prayer and certainly in the spirit of Christian Lent. Wash your hands and PRAY each and every time!

For now, here is the plan for us at Good Shepherd (and it may change with further advice):

- There will be no Sunday Services on 15 or 22 March (hope to begin again on 29 March)
- There will be no Sunday Christian Formation or social gathering until 29 March
- EYC events will be suspended until after 30 March
- Good Shepherd Episcopal School will be closed until the FISD reopens
- Parent's Day Out will be suspended until 30 March
- All Religious Education gatherings will be suspended until at least 30 March
 - Prayer Shawl Ministry
 - Women's Bible Study
 - Wednesday Evening Lenten Programming
- Choir Practice is suspended until after 27 March
- The Bridge Group will not meet on 13 March
- The ECW will not meet or have their gatherings until after 30 March
- The Brotherhood of St Andrew will not meet or gather until after 30 March
- The NOOK will be closed to customers beginning 14 March, reopening 30 March
- The Vestry will meet virtually on 19 March
- We are scheduled to host Family Promise beginning 29 March. We are in communication.

Indeed, we are literally shut down to any group activity here at the Church until our next planned Sunday services on 29 March. We can still communicate! Please do! Check in on each other by phone or text or Skype or Facebook live. Especially as we discover individuals may have needs in the next two weeks.

The office will remain open from 9 am-2pm for individual needs and will serve as a Communication Hub for us during the next two weeks. The Staff will meet as usual but in Shepherd's Hall and at a distance from each other.

IMPORTANTLY, for this Sunday you are invited to join the rest of the DIOCESE of TEXAS at WORSHIP at CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL, on line at www.ChristChurchCathedral.org . We hope to offer services of our own, virtually, as we move into next week.

It is a time to PRAY FOR EACH OTHER and especially for those afflicted by this and other diseases and to use the time you might have now at home for the building up of the greater Kingdom of God through prayer and continued presence to the PRESENCE of GOD in each of our lives.

PLEASE email me or Amanda with questions you may have. If there is an emergency, contact me as you would under ordinary circumstances by text or phone call. I and Amanda will be in the office regularly as will some other staff members at various times.

In the Peace that only Jesus can give,
Fr. Bob

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