

A Word from the Clergy

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us. – Romans 5:3-5

These verses which form the core focus of this year's stewardship campaign continue to provide new insight to our common life together as a parish. Remembering that our present sufferings make way for the Spirit of God to lead us to a new place, a new reality, one in which suffering is replaced with hope, is part of the mystery of God's grace that we have the gracious privilege to carry out in our lives.

Sometimes, however, this requires us to do hard things and make difficult decisions. This is such a time. After consulting with the vestry, I, along with Mother Pamela, have come to the conclusion that due to the rising numbers related to the COVID-19 pandemic in both our state and county, it is in the best interest of everyone that we once again suspend in-person worship. **Therefore, beginning this Sunday, November 1st, quite appropriately on the Feast of All Saints, we will gather as the partnered parishes of St. Luke's and Church of the Good Shepherd for "ZOOM Church."** (See above information for how to be connected to ZOOM Church.)

I know this comes as a disappointment to us all. The return to in-person worship, begun last month, was a welcome sign that perhaps some semblance of normalcy was returning to our common life. As clergy, we rejoiced to be able to gather in church for worship with those who were able to gather, to hear the Word of God and to share in the Sacrament of Holy Communion. Yet, we would encourage everyone to remember what is at stake, should we fail to do what is right and in the best interest of, not only the safety of our parishioners, but that of the entire community. Quite literally, what is at stake are people's lives, friends, loved ones, and strangers alike, not to mention, the thousands of front line workers and health care professionals who daily confront the realities of this pandemic on behalf of all of us. We all must sacrifice, and if suspending our small in-person worship gatherings helps to make the overall situation safer for all people in our community, then our choice and path are clear.

We will do whatever it takes to show the world that love of God and love of our neighbor is the highest value we hold. So, continue to pray, beloved. Continue to be safe. Continue to show others the peace of God which passes understanding and guards us one and all, mind, body, and spirit.

Peace,

The Rev. C. Earl Mahan, Rector

The Rev. Dr. Pamela Stuerke, Assisting Priest