

St. John's Anglican Church, Greensboro, North Carolina
Father Mark Menees, D.D.
March 20, 2020

Dear Friends in Christ,

Much has happened over the past day or so with regard to the coronavirus and our need to respond to the challenges in a responsible and faithful way. I have been in communication with the Vestry, other parishes, and our Bishops to determine the best course forward over the days and weeks ahead. In the midst of the conversations today I received a letter from our House of Bishops which I am attaching for publication to the parish. They have instructed all parishes to cancel face to face worship for a minimum of at least 2 weeks in order to protect everyone and assist slowing the spread of the disease. I know all of you find this, as I do, a painful alteration in our normal pattern of receiving the Sacraments and being together. Nevertheless, our worship will continue and we will stand with millions of other Christians lifting our voices to God.

The plan now is for me to continue to offer Mass at our regular hours, and we will stream it live through St. John's Facebook page. (<https://m.facebook.com/stjohnsgso/>) I am asking that Bonnie Swaney also add this address to our website so people can access it. My sincere thanks to Nichole Isley for her assistance and time in helping put this possibility in place. We will do our best to provide a way for all to share in worship at St. John's. While it may seem a little strange to participate in worship from a distance, the key is that we can all participate and still provide safety in an ethically responsible way. The Bishops' letter has a segment on Spiritual Communion to assist us with our worship during these days of distancing.

Please know that I will be at the church regularly praying the Offices and offering Mass, and will be available for pastoral conversation and care as we journey on through Lent. The church will not cease in our prayers or as a place of solace and support. We should especially reflect on Christ's journey toward Jerusalem and his self-offering which is a testimony of God's love for us. To love deeply is to be willing to suffer deeply with those we love and Christ's sacrifice shows us the depth of God's love for us. Christ takes our life, including our fear and worry, into his life and never leaves us to face it alone.

God's Peace be with you,

Fr. Mark