
The Fifth Sunday in Lent
March 29, 2020



Good afternoon St. Paul's Family,

There are lots of things that I need to share with you at this time. The latest **from our Bishop is that we won't be opening churches until May at the earliest.** So we will continue to be streaming our services, and having Zoom coffee hours. Last week worked pretty well. We had a few folks who reported that the sound stopped, but others it didn't. We suspect that it is your system giving you fits in that case, but we will be upping the strength of our stream next week.

Streaming report: We had 109 people who were with us for our service last week, and 14 of you joined in our coffee hour. During that time we got to see Davie Dinkin's new puppy, and someone complained that there weren't any tasty goodies at our virtual coffee hour. But generally people were just happy to see one another and join us in conversation. I've figured out how to have it be just a bit less chaotic, and realized that I was the problem in the loud noises because I'd failed to turn off my church mic. **Remember our Live Stream is at 10:00 found at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Bremerton, WA, and then coffee hour at 11:30 at the Zoom address below.**

Below is your invitation to coffee hour for this Sunday. And I'm making it for 11:30, since we found that it took a little bit of time to move from the service to getting organized with Zoom.

It's not too late to send us a copy of your new photo to be included in our rogues gallery of people in the pews. Here's a picture of last week's team doing the service. If you look behind them, you can see that some of you are sitting happily in your pews.



Kathleen Kingslight is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: St. Paul's Virtual Coffee Hour

Time: Mar 29, 2020 11:30 AM Pacific Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/530610532?pwd=SIFnRXRaWFh6aFRPZnN2Q3dqYWQ2UT09>

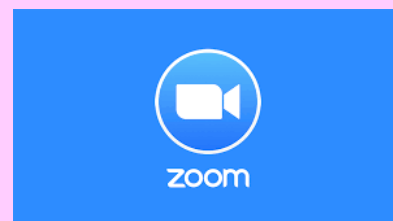
Meeting ID: 530 610 532

Password: 665624

One tap mobile

+13462487799,,530610532# US (Houston)

+16699006833,,530610532# US (San Jose)



Dial by your location

+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)

+1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)

+1 253 215 8782 US

+1 301 715 8592 US

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

+1 929 436 2866 US (New York)

Meeting ID: 530 610 532

Find your local number: <https://zoom.us/u/afaOgC14i>

Now if you didn't join us last week because you didn't know how. Try again, don't be afraid, you can do this! This is the way you can be in community with your community! **How to do it!** Download the Zoom app onto whatever phone, pad or computer you intend to use. Note the Meeting ID and Password above plug those into the Zoom meeting and join us at 11:30. After you've watched the service on our Facebook page.

This week's team for streaming will be Duane and Scott de Lessart, videographer and reader, and John Kingslight as musician, and your priest.

The Diocese has suggested that we change people in these roles and use absolute social distancing. They have also asked that we each take our temp before we leave home to report it at the church, write down what exposures we may have had recently, and indicate how we are feeling that day. I've been trying to get a parish thermometer, and ordered one at the beginning of March, but none were available... unless we wanted to pay \$500... which we didn't want to do. But will be coming in May. I pray that the worst will be over by then. So before you come to help with the streaming. Please take your temp at home.

Also, in considering **Holy week services**. I would encourage you to **visit St. Mark's Cathedral for Maundy Thursday, and Good Friday services**. Both of those services require so much movement, and interaction, that it doesn't seem prudent to do them this year. If they are an important part of your Lenten journey, and I hope that they are, please visit St. Marks, or the National Cathedral in Washington, where they can pull it off with grace and beauty. We will be doing both Palm Sunday and the Easter Vigil at St. Paul's.

Both the Bishop's Leadership Conference scheduled in April, and the May Cathedral Day confirmations have been cancelled for 2020. So those of you who have been in the newcomer's class and were looking forward to being received, confirmed or in reaffirming your commitment to your faith, we'll have to wait on the official service.

We're about to launch an old fashion phone tree, so that everyone in the parish receives a call each week. Since I can't possibly do that alone, we are inviting the entire parish to take on this easy form of pastoral care for one another. You will be asking three easy questions: 1) How you are doing? If your health is OK? 2) Is there anything that we need to know, or if you have dire needs that we might be able to meet? 3) And finally if you have prayer requests. And then I'd invite you to pray with your person or persons you have called.

I want to get the Vestry trained on how we're doing this first, then they will launch it and invite you to participate. This will take the place of our original pastoral care pods, which was a start in the right direction, though never got off the ground very far.



Our Bishop has put out a Pastoral Letter this week that I want to share with you:

March 26, 2020

"To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace." Romans 8:6

Today is my son's 24th birthday. He lives in New Orleans, which has become one of the COVID-19 hotspots right now. Several weeks ago, and for months

before that, we had planned to leave today to be in New Orleans for his birthday and to spend the weekend with him. Of course, all of that has changed. And that is a reality for all of us. Many, many things have changed and continue to every day. For our planet, and for its inhabitants, this is one of the greatest challenges of our lifetimes. There is great uncertainty about so much.

And in many ways, we feel in exile. Adrift a bit. That is not a comforting feeling. What we know is scary, what we don't know even scarier. And yet, even in isolated exile, we are not alone. It's apparent now that our Holy Week and Easter Day will need to be virtual and not face-to-face. Yes, that is a huge loss for us. It will be mightily different. But hear me, please. Nothing can stop Easter. Nothing. It is coming, virus or not, packed churches or empty ones. No matter what, it is coming. That is actually the whole point of Easter in the first place, Jesus risen from the dead, and through that, complete victory over death. This virus, nor nothing else, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. In my sermon this past Sunday, as I contemplated Psalm 23, I said these words:

My fellow followers. God is right here, even if we all can't be. God is right with you, God is with everyone suffering with this, and even with those selfishly ignoring all of this. You and I may not get to share communion right now, but in God, we are in communion. Even separated we are communion... Coming here was and will be again a great blessing, and now we might even say a luxury. We will certainly relish it when we can be here again, but no space, no symbol, no ritual, no manual act done perfectly, or not done at all, no theology or ecclesiology will ever make us be loved one bit more, or less by God. Wherever we are, together, or separate, surrounding this table, or surrounding the world, God is in the midst of us, loving us.

And I believe all of it. As Paul's Letter to the Romans reminds us this Sunday, we are people of the Spirit, not of the flesh, and yet the flesh is not completely negated by that reality. We still live our very real, "fleshy" lives. We are certainly doing that now. But, as people of the Spirit, we have hope beyond this earthly life of the flesh.

As Mayor Durkin of Seattle reminded me yesterday in a interview she gave, "Hope is not an action." I thought that line sounded a bit strange, but the more I thought about it, the more it really resonates with me, "Hope is not an action."

Hopelessness is where we sit on the curb, with our head in our hands, and we give up. We are immobilized, we don't move. We could just as easily sit on the curb, with our head in our hands, and say we are hopeful, and still not move. Hope is a concept, a feeling, an aspiration, but it is not, in and of itself, an action. As I reflected on this more, I believe from hope comes action. And without that second part, no hope can be realized. It might be hopeful to simply state, "Oh, this virus will pass. It will just sweep right through us and be gone." That is perhaps hope, or a whole lot of wishful thinking, but those words are not going to make this virus disappear.

Our call to action right now is a hopeful call. We can flatten the curve. We

can spread out the pain and loss, instead of adding to the pain and loss. That is our hope, To realize that hope, we have to act. And the action we need to take right now is so foreign to us, both as Americans and as Christians. For us, action means going, doing, being with others, walking closely, along side. And yet this enemy needs the exact opposite from us. The only antidote we have, the only weapon against this enemy, is separation. Please abide by it. We need each other right now, but our need is to be separated, as much of a sacrifice as that is. Every single contact is a potential for continued spread. Every one. I am urging you to take every one seriously, for with every one we not only put ourselves and those we love, but all others, especially those on the front lines, nurses, doctors, EMTs, allied health professionals, chaplains, more at risk. Our role is simple, stay home, stay apart, say your prayers, and continue, as you can, to give. If you have not lost your income, and you still can, please give, to your church, to those agencies helping on the front lines, to any we can, as much as we can.

I am hopeful. Very hopeful. I believe in the God of Love and through that Love I know all matter of things shall be well, and I also firmly believe that hope alone is not an action, but that out of hope, comes action. Let's be what we profess to be, in all the times we are together, the people of the Spirit, people of hope, people of action, people of care for others, those we know, and those we don't. Because Paul was right, and is right now, "to set our minds on the flesh is death, but to set our minds on the Spirit, is life and peace."

I am so grateful, and truly inspired, by all that you are doing, for the creative ways you are staying connected, and being the Body of Christ, even in separation and isolation. Thank you. I am so blessed to be in this ministry, at this time, with all of you

Blessings,

+Greg

Mason Bees: We talked about having Mason Bees here at the church many months ago, but in the face of COVID, they somehow didn't seem like a big priority. But to be able to support local folks, we have put up houses and bees in the time frame that they need for spring work. **The Pictures:** First of all here are three Mason Bee houses made by our own Curtis Anderson! John Kingslight putting them up, and finally, three of the five in place, in the Close of the Church. We pray that all those little babies hatch out, fulfill their duties, and pollinate, pollinate, pollinate!!!



Thank you to Curtis for his donation of three houses and bee tubes, and to the other family who provided two other houses, tubes and bees still in their cocoons.



Bobbi our Office Manager is keeping hours at the church, she's there alone, so she's safe from COVID. Karissa our Sexton is doing deep cleaning room by room. Again she is there alone, so she can work safely. **I'm working from home but talking to folks all day long.** So feel free to call or text, if you need to chat, or want prayer or whatever... sorry, we're nearly out of TP, so I can't offer you any.

Our Sunday service bulletin, will be found on our Web page each week. Then we invite you to join us for worship on our St. Paul's FaceBook page: St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Bremerton, WA

Please stay safe and healthy. Stay home, be gentle with one another, keep on praying, don't allow fear to paralyze you.

Tender Cyber Hugs to you!
MKK+

Readings for Sunday

Ezekiel 37:1-14
Psalm 130
Romans 8:6-11
John 11: 1-45

