

The Door is STILL Always Open.

Pastoral Letter on Covid-19 (Part 2!!!)_

Yesterday – that’s how fast this is moving – I posted encouragement that our worship would continue as is until such time as we were told differently. That day has just come and as you can see from the new link below, our Bishop has ordered that public worship in our buildings be halted for a period of time.

However, your clergy, musician, and a few others will offer readings prayers, sermon and music through live stream that can be viewed on any device connected to the internet.

The live stream will be open several minutes ahead of scheduled time and you can log on anytime during the hour. Your side automatically will be muted to start. After worship concludes - roughly a half hour to 45 minutes - I’ll try turning on the sound and we’ll see if we can chat a bit. If this is the first time using the app, I recommend you download it on your smart phone ahead of time. The link should bring you right to our prayer service in church.

Fr. Philip Carr-Jones is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: 8 am Worship

Time: Mar 15, 2020 08:00 AM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting. (CLICK BELOW)

<https://zoom.us/j/575453887>

Meeting ID: 575 453 887

One tap mobile

+19292056099,,575453887# US (New York)

+16699006833,,575453887# US (San Jose)

Dial by your location

+1 929 205 6099 US (New York)

+1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)

Meeting ID: 575 453 887

Find your local number: <https://zoom.us/u/a9DgAbxNN>

Topic: 10 am Worship

Time: Mar 15, 2020 10:00 AM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting
<https://zoom.us/j/980114608>

Meeting ID: 980 114 608

One tap mobile
+19292056099,,980114608# US (New York)
+16699006833,,980114608# US (San Jose)

Dial by your location
+1 929 205 6099 US (New York)
+1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)

Meeting ID: 980 114 608
Find your local number: <https://zoom.us/u/a9DgAbxNN>

The Door is Still Open.

So in this way, the door is going to be always open: the doorway to prayer, to community, to spiritual counsel and to friendship with God through common worship; all will remain uninterrupted. And should you choose to come to church, I will be there, and we will share the time in accordance to Bishop Stoke's guidelines for safe participation.

Below is a link from our Bishop Chip Stokes:

<https://mailchi.mp/diocesefnj.org/bishop-stokes-announces-immediate-suspension-of-public-worship-services?e=11ccc162f6>

In addition, we will gather in small groups over the coming weeks also through ZOOM for conversation and discussion and checking in together. In much the same way as we gathered in small groups for the house blessings, we will remain connected and grow together as community and disciples of Christ.

I invite you to prayer. You will find the appointed Collect for the Third Sunday of Lent, this very coming Sunday, to be remarkably on point:

Third Sunday in Lent

Almighty God, you know that we have no power in ourselves to help ourselves:
Keep us both outwardly in our bodies and inwardly in our souls,
that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body,
and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul;
through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

And here's one which we rarely pray together since the Season of Epiphany usually stops well before eight weeks. But here it is:

Eighth Sunday after the Epiphany

Most loving Father, whose will it is for us to give thanks for all things,
to fear nothing but the loss of you, and to cast all our care on you who care for us:
Preserve us from faithless fears and worldly anxieties,
that no clouds of this mortal life may hide from us the light of that love which is immortal,
and which you have manifested to us in your Son Jesus Christ our Lord;
who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever. *Amen.*

On behalf of the Clergy, Wardens and Vestry, you are invited to cast all your care on God, wash your hands dutifully and frequently(!), and allow for the grace of God to pervade your lives with peace and tranquility.

The church, over the centuries, has faced even more challenging times than these. A couple months ago, in a sermon, I quoted St. Cyprian, who composed his *Epistle to Donatus*, written to his Roman friend while sitting in a garden, not long after he was baptized (around 246 CE). In it, he bravely claims his faith when such a public claim came with severe risk.

“It is a bad world, Donatus, an incredibly bad world. But I have discovered in the midst of it a quiet and good people who have learned the great secret of life. They have found a joy and wisdom which is a thousand times better than any of the pleasures of our sinful life. They are despised and persecuted, but they care not. They are masters of their souls. They have overcome the world. These people, Donatus, are Christians. . . and I am one of them.”

Let us show the same solid resolve, a joy and wisdom, being a quiet and good people who have learned the secret of life. Rest well friends, and be of excellent cheer even in a world of shadow.

As far as it is possible for any of us, let us be masters of our souls.

Faithfully,

Fr. Phil