

March 25, 2020

STAY CONNECTED!

Dear Friends,

Another week has passed in our strange “new normal”. The wardens and I wish to keep in close contact with you during this time of uncertainty in our vastly different landscape. Again, I will address our four major areas of ministry that must continue in spite of the world closing down around us. Now sit down with a cup of tea or a glass of wine. This is a very long email.

1. **WORSHIP** was a wonderful experience last week. The conference call worship service was a time of great joy. About a hundred people joined in and there was much fun and laughter as we gave thanks for being together. The reciting of the Lord’s Prayer and the singing of Morning has Broken, by a hundred people over the telephone, was madness, but we loved it. The importance of community rung out loudly and clearly as we gathered together in real time at 10:00am. The pre-recorded liturgy on our website was beautiful, as we watched Matthew Otto play and choir members singing solos from our church, Andrew Colman reading the gospel from his apartment and Molly preaching an excellent sermon from her dining room! We will continue to offer these two liturgies each week, as long as is necessary.

There are many liturgical/devotional happenings in our community and the wider diocese, and I invite you to participate as you are able.

- a. This Sunday (March 29th) there will be two more CCDP opportunities for worship. As we did last week, there will be an interactive conference call service at 10:00am (see below for dial-in information) and an online worship service that will be posted on our website and available for you to watch by the time you awake Sunday morning. Please join us for either or both. Simultaneously, Andrew Colman will be offering Children’s Ministry via ZOOM, for the children of our parish.
- b. For the telephone liturgy at 10:00 on Sunday, please follow these steps:
Dial: **1-844-614-2305** anywhere in Canada Toll-Free
647-794-1282 in Toronto
Then enter this number when prompted for the conference ID:
996 093 863#
- c. For the online, pre-recorded service, please go to our website:
www.christchurchdeerpark.org
- d. The bulletin for the morning service is attached to this email.

- e. As we plan worship for each week, we are acutely aware that we will not be celebrating Holy Week and Easter together in our wonderful church, honouring our Lord's death and rejoicing at his resurrection. This saddens me, but we remain a community of faith, no matter what adversity we encounter. Please stay tuned for our Good Friday and Easter Day plans for worship at home.
- f. Our Lent series continues with Cathy Gibbs. Last Tuesday, twenty-four of us joined in a video conferencing (ZOOM) call as we delved further into the Signs of Life study, focussing on Shelter. Next week is our final week and, fortuitously, Community will be the focus.
- g. March 26th is an important day in the life of our Diocese, and I invite you to pray and fast with our Bishops. This note from Bishop Asbil: "One of the Church's practices that I ask you to rediscover and promote this Lent is a time of dedicated prayer and fasting. **The College of Bishops is calling for a Day of Prayer and Fasting today, Thursday, March 26th.** Throughout scripture and in the Church's story, prayer and fasting have been held together as a recognition of our total dependence on God. Time and again, we read in the Bible of people who, in times of great distress or calamity, dedicated themselves to prayer and fasting, lifting up their situation to God in faith, hope and trust. I invite you to do so tomorrow, remembering before God the Covid19 pandemic throughout the world, and how it is affecting all people. Resources to help you are [found here](#)".
- h. Christ Church Deer Park Digital channels include:
Website: www.christchurchdeerpark.org
Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/ccdpToronto/>
Instagram account: <https://www.instagram.com/christchurchdeerpark/>

Check these channels frequently during the pandemic. We will be posting devotions throughout the time we are unable to meet and worship together.

2. **PASTORAL CARE** is particularly needed when we have been cut off from each other and when we are acutely aware that the virus can be a deadly attack on our elderly. I am thankful that a great deal of informal telephone and email "visits" have been occurring in our community. More formally, your clergy and lay staff plan to call everyone on the parish list to check in. If you do not hear from us, but would like to talk, please call the church (416.920.5211) and leave a message in the general voicemail box.
3. **OUTREACH** to the needy continues at CCDP, and our Bishop has asked us to keep offering "critical outreach ministries to vulnerable and marginalized communities." In an effort to do this, we have adopted risk mitigation strategies that are being implemented

across the community food programs in the Diocese and city. These practises have been developed to mitigate the risk to both our volunteers and guests.

- a. Last Saturday we had our first breakfast since the closing of our building. Under Anne Larkin's direction we provided a hot breakfast prepared in the community kitchen. In Anne's words: "We gave our guests croissant, sausages and a mini frittata. They also received a bag with yogurt, cheese, fruit, cutlery, salts and pepper, jam, peanut butter, juice, bar soap, lotion, shower gel, lip balm." There was a table outside on which the food was placed for pick up. The guests did not enter the building. Fewer volunteers were needed and social distancing was observed. (See attached photo from last Saturday's breakfast)
- b. Anne is also a key worker with the Churches-on-the-Hill Foodbank. She informs us that the cancellation of the annual food drive, and the closing of other food banks due to Covid-19, our foodbank is in dire need of funds to get through this crisis. Please donate online: <http://www.cothfoodbank.ca/donate/> Your money is needed to keep the poor fed. Anne is also in need of volunteers for both the Saturday breakfast and foodbank ministries. All able bodied and healthy people are welcome. Teenagers and their parents who are at home, may like to consider these volunteer opportunities. Please be in touch with Anne Larkin: larkin_anne@hotmail.com or the church. Messages are picked up daily.
- c. With sadness and concern, we have had to close our doors to the seven Alcoholics Anonymous and Cocaine Anonymous groups that meet each week in our building. The groups all exceed ten people and with no custodial staff on the premises, it was not wise to continue to provide them space for meeting. I ask your prayers for this community and hope that their mentorship programme and virtual meetings via video/telephone conferencing will benefit the members, until such time as they can return to our building.

4. **ADMINISTRATION and FINANCE** are a constant concern for us during this crisis and so here is a word from your wardens:

"During these stressful times, we want you to know that the Management Team is working together to best support our Parish and Staff. We have moved our meetings to a virtual forum using conference and video calls, meeting three times a week to coordinate our Parish's response to the COVID-19 crisis. We're looking at things in the following categories: worship, parish operations, financial impact, outreach programs, and our employee's health and wellbeing. The crisis is changing rapidly as such we are trying to respond rapidly, and our approach is to reevaluate the current state on a weekly basis.

“And in order to provide support and financial assurance to our Staff during these uncertain times, we have voted on continuing to pay our Staff salary as they were being paid before the COVID-19 crisis.

“And finally, we want to thank the weekly/monthly envelope donors whom we contacted to make alternative contribution arrangements. Along with our PAR and VISA donations, we are grateful for your continued financial support. Salaries, our diocesan assessment, utilities and a host of other expenses will still be paid even as the crisis rages. And therefore, it is reassuring to know that during these uncertain times, we are all supporting one another in our Christian community.

“Unfortunately, we have had to close the building and so there are no office hours. However, email and telephone messages are being retrieved. If you wish to stop into the church to drop off or pick up anything, please call ahead and make arrangements. Do know that the Management Team is monitoring recommendations from all levels of Government, Public Health and those from our Bishops in order to make the best decisions for our CCDP family. We want to be here for you. If you have any questions, concerns or need, please reach out!”

Many blessings to you. I look forward to connecting with you at our services on Sunday. Come prepared to sing over the phone!

Cheryl Palmer

