

## Q&A from the Clergy Webinars April 7 and 8 2020

In her opening comments, Bishop Susan was laudatory about the beautiful and creative worship experiences that the clergy of the diocese are putting forward. She's participated in several, both on Palm Sunday and during the week, and she is so grateful for the faithful work the clergy are doing. Her remarks will be made available in a condensed form in a general letter announcing, among other matters, changes in guidelines for worship and for use of the church buildings in this time. The letter will be sent out later today (April 8th.)

### FINANCE AND ADMIN

Some guidance from Mark Eastham, Chief of Staff

- Scammers are out there. If you receive an email purporting to be from a Bishop or diocesan staff that requests money or gift cards, take a closer look to see if the missive comes on diocesan letterhead, or if the email comes from the real email address of the sender. If it is not from an email address with "thediocese.net", it is not from the bishop or diocesan staff. Please warn your parishioners about this as well.
- One option for supporting parishioners and also hospitals, front-line first responders and care providers is Dial-A-Priest. Check it out at [www.dialapriest.com](http://www.dialapriest.com). Clergy can sign up to offer services on their website.
- Please be attentive to the security of your buildings. Check in with the police and let them know you're not in the building except on very rare occasions now so they can be aware if strangers are trying to get in.

Key updates from Ted Smith

- For info on new Charitable giving incentives through CARES: [http://www.thediocese.net/Customer-Content/www/CMS/files/Finance\\_and\\_Management/ECF\\_CARES\\_Act\\_Charitable\\_Giving\\_Incentives.pdf](http://www.thediocese.net/Customer-Content/www/CMS/files/Finance_and_Management/ECF_CARES_Act_Charitable_Giving_Incentives.pdf)
- For the latest re CARES loans such as the Paycheck Protection Program: [http://www.thediocese.net/Customer-Content/www/CMS/files/Finance\\_and\\_Management/Finances\\_Your\\_Parish\\_and\\_CARES\\_Act\\_and\\_SBA\\_Loans\\_040620.pdf](http://www.thediocese.net/Customer-Content/www/CMS/files/Finance_and_Management/Finances_Your_Parish_and_CARES_Act_and_SBA_Loans_040620.pdf)

### Q & A begins

We still need to go to our churches to get mail. Yes, but choose carefully whom you send in; you don't want to compromise someone who is in the vulnerable category.

I assume this ban on pre-recorded and streaming liturgies includes outside worship groups who rent space from us for worship. Yes.

We have an Autism School who fall under therapy guidelines and therefore have been permitted to remain open to date. Would you recommend allowing this school to keep using the church building? Thank you for the help. **This is complicated. We're surprised that the school is permitted to remain open. You should have a conversation with the director of the school making sure that all necessary protocols are being followed. Please do touch base with one of our leadership team members for further guidance.**

We were told by our banker that the parsonage allowance would not be allowed. What can we do? **We are seeing uneven understanding of the implementation of the CARES Paycheck Protection Program loans among the banks and are in contact with some of the lenders to offer clarification. We addressed this at length with our Wardens' and Treasurers' Zoom webinars and we'll keep you all posted about this.**

We receive significant revenue from renters who conduct their own worship services in our facility. With this change in guidance, it will have an impact on our budget. Have you any suggestions as to how we might weather this? **It is a difficult challenge, and other parishes are struggling with this as well. Please call one of us on the Leadership Team (Bishop Goff, Bishop Brook-Davidson, Mark Eastham, Ted Smith, Canon Mary Thorpe) individually so we can talk it through with you.**

We have a school, and though the classes are now being done online, our teachers come and go. The school janitor is there every day for about 5 hours. Should this practice be discontinued? **Please call Canon Mary Thorpe to discuss this.**

Can we continue our food bank? **Yes, you can, as long as you make sure all protocols are being followed. Be in touch with local health authorities to make sure you're aware of the latest guidance to keep everyone safe.**

We do not have the ability to remote access our computers or email from home. What are we to do? **Talk to us one on one and we can sort things out with you. Talk to us one on one and we can sort things out with you. You can email or talk to Erin Kamran (ekamran@thediocese.net) about technological challenges. If you are not able to record or livestream a service, you don't have to. There are some congregations in our diocese that are urging all their people to click on the worship from the National Cathedral or to click on worship from other congregations in this diocese (Online services are listed here: <http://www.thediocese.net/news-and-events/covid-19-resources/virtual-worship/>). Note one of our attendees suggested this: In our community folks can park outside the library to use its wifi and stay in their cars.**

Re definition of "vulnerable" clergy: Can the Diocese offer a clear age rule to help us avoid discussion/disputes/judgment calls? **The CDC sets the age of increased risk as 65. There may be individuals who are not yet 65 but who have underlying health issues (compromised immune systems or severe asthma, for example) who should consider themselves vulnerable.**

Any halt on search processes? **We're working with parishes in the search process on a case by case basis. We've gotten comfortable with using technology to assist in the process in ways we haven't done**

before. Parishes that are closer to the end of their process are most likely to continue to press forward, but we are in conversation with each of the parishes in transition and plan to support them whether they want to keep the process active or place it on hold.

Have we begun any thinking of looking at all the pastoral care / PTSD that is already and will be needed when this time ends? **Very true. After Easter we will begin to focus more on that important conversation in our webinars and beyond.**

What about AA meetings? **Please talk to your contacts for AA meetings in your building. We suggest that you and they look to the national organization for guidance. AA is encouraging groups to meet virtually. AA guidance: [https://aa.org/pages/en\\_US/update-on-covid-19-coronavirus](https://aa.org/pages/en_US/update-on-covid-19-coronavirus)**

LITURGY:

What should I tell a couple due to marry on July 25th? **I expect that the couple are wondering about a number of things relating to their plans, such as the venue, the photographer and such. We are all hoping that we'll be in a new normal by then without restrictions. All we can do right now is to keep waiting and hopefully we will have an answer well before July 25<sup>th</sup>.**

Bishop, do you have thoughts about going to the church this week and pre-recording several Sundays' worth of morning prayer collects, then filling in readings and sermons in a weekly fashion from home? Trying to discern letter vs. spirit of law and also put the comforting visual image of the church they love in front of my people. Thanks. **The church building is such an icon for us. It is significant. This new restriction goes into effect after Easter Day. You may go and record some things this week, subject of course to current limitations and guidelines. I would ask that for future Sundays, when you use such recordings in your worship space, you'd note prominently that this was recorded before Easter, so people won't think you're violating the restriction.**

I've given last rites via zoom. Since then, parishioners are visiting this person one at a time, per the family's permission. May I go in person to anoint, once, as well? **Assuming this dying person is not suffering from COVID-19, in which case you should not go at all, I'd recommend you have a conversation with the family. You do not want to bring in any additional possibilities for further infection. You may visit if you are comfortable doing so, but you cannot lay on hands nor can you anoint.**

Could you please comment on the ministrations at the time of death through the Dial a Priest program...does it seem pastorally appropriate to "phone it in"? **Yes, it is appropriate in the many cases when it is the only way, because at this time many places do not allow anyone, not even clergy, to come into the facility. But please do understand that the Dial-a-Priest program is intended to do more than simply attending to patients at the time of death. The program, which is based out of VTS, invites retired or semi-retired priests to do telephonic pastoral care, for patients, for family and for clinical staff. We'd recommend that you explore [www.dialapriest.com](http://www.dialapriest.com) if you want to help.**

Does this mean the National Cathedral will stop webcasting their services from the building? **We haven't heard that they are ceasing their livestreaming at this point. That would be a decision of the Cathedral and Diocese of Washington, not ours.**

I took photos of the different areas of the church. I am using these as backgrounds for ZOOM meetings and recordings. Perhaps that will help others. **Certainly – that's an excellent idea that many of us are doing. Please note clearly when you are using a pre-photographed background, so that viewers know you are following the stay at home orders.**

As the weather gets better, can we gather outdoors...6 feet apart...to worship together? **Let's hold off on this until we say that you can. Under our current restrictions, this is not permissible.**

My home doesn't have internet capacity for worship from home. Can I lead worship from my office? **Yes, you can, if it's your only option.**

Just sharing an excellent resource: Intercessory Prayers in the midst of the spread of COVID-19 issued by The Lutheran World Federation; you can find them on their website.

<https://www.lutheranworld.org/content/resource-intercessory-prayer-midst-spread-covid-19>

A lot of other dioceses are directing their parishes to their cathedrals for Easter Day worship. Are there any plans to offer LiveStreamed worship at the Shrine, our cathedral? **On the face of it, that's a lovely idea. However, internet connectivity is unreliable at the Shrine and, most importantly, ShrineMont is closed right now.**

This might be premature, but are there any thoughts on appropriate liturgies to celebrate the reopening of our churches? Use of New Zealand? **After Easter and a bit of rest, we'll begin to take a look at that. When we know which that Sunday is going to be, we'll look at the readings and decide whether we want to offer some alternative readings or other resources. Something to look forward to!**

On a somewhat related note, we'd note that your Bishops are missing visitations just as you are – that's very much on our radar. They will all be rescheduled. We are blessed with a third bishop coming to be with us, Bishop Porter Taylor (scheduled to join us on 7/1/2020) and he comes with a wide-open visitation schedule. We will also be looking at group confirmations, not in place of a parish visit, to provide options for confirmations. If gathering is possible, we'll look forward to a diocesan confirmation service at ShrineMont over July 4<sup>th</sup> weekend. We are believers in hope! We'll create options around the diocese to make sure we don't lose anyone, once we know when we can gather.

Should we wear masks while recording liturgy in the sanctuary (until Easter)? **It might be awkward to try and speak through a mask while recording. But at some point, even perhaps at the beginning, have it on, then take it off. Again, this is modeling to our parishioners what we all should be doing.**

I haven't heard anyone suggest that couples can go ahead and have a civil wedding at the courthouse and have the church service and blessing later. I have done this in the past when it seemed necessary. Often people aren't aware of this possibility. Can clergy be reminded of this possibility? I haven't heard anyone suggest that couples can go ahead and have a civil wedding at the courthouse and have the

church service and blessing later. I have done this in the past when it seemed necessary. Often people aren't aware of this possibility. Can clergy be reminded of this possibility? Yes. **This is, in fact, the preferred option, especially when postponement is not acceptable.**

#### FORMATION:

From Minister for Christian Formation Paris Ball: The diocesan Office of Christian Formation is offering open “office hours” once a week. Twice a month, they are hosting a virtual formation leaders’ lunch. These are opportunities to share ideas on how to do formation. We will make sure that info goes out widely. Info on Formation and Spiritual Devotion Resources can be found here: <http://www.thediocese.net/news-and-events/covid-19-resources/formation-and-personal-devotion/> and here: <https://www.dovformation.net/>

#### RELATED ORGANIZATIONS:

Any indication that Shrine Mont will be open on or about June 10? **They are proceeding with the hope that things will move forward this summer as planned but they are also aware that we’re still in waiting and wondering. *Paris on summer camp*: we are still set to run as previously scheduled. Working diligently to think through what alternative options might be available. It’s too soon to decide exactly what camp will look like this year given where the state is right now – but in some form, there will be camp!**