

Clergy Webinar Q&A April 28 and 29, 2020

### Opening Prayer

*God, we come to you again with so many prayers. We need you and trust that you hear us. God of power, temper your strength so you might gently wrap your arms of comfort around us. God of strength, lift up those who have the least and need the most. God of providence, shine your light so all see the gifts you have given to so many among us. God of new beginnings, remind us of the many rebirths, the many new seasons of life you have midwived. God of Sabbath, lead us to a place of trust where we can find restoration for our weary hearts. God of grief, walk with us as we bury our dead, comfort the grieving, and make community when it no longer resembles the community we knew. God who speaks, encourage us to raise our voices for those who are struggling. God who walks with us, give us a half measure of your tenacity to keep walking this road, one foot and then another, until we come to the place where we are once again whole. We ask all this in the name of your Son our Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.*

Click here for [Bishop Susan's Remarks](#)

Brief remarks from Julie Simonton and Stephanie Higgins on Stewardship: *There is a new Stewardship and Development FaceBook page ( <https://www.facebook.com/DOVstewardshipdevelopment/>). We want to offer timely and useful materials to address your questions. During May we'll host Zoom webinars for you and your volunteer and lay professionals: Wednesday evenings at 7, Thursday mornings at 9:30 to discuss current stewardship and development guidance for an hour – ongoing information for stewardship ministries and how you are doing them now. Next we plan to talk about the giving curve after disasters and emergencies. This is the normal expected decline in plate, pledge and other giving after a crisis. You'll learn where your church is right now, and healthy responsive Godly stewardship in this season. Church Vitality Day will go online and will look and move differently in response to the COVID crisis. Two interactive webinars and annual giving presentations launched at the end of May. Recordings will also be available afterwards, segmented so you can easily find topic-specific modules. Other topics will include digital giving, digital storytelling, and both visual and narrative budgets. These will be in June. Keep your eyes open for Giving Tuesday (May 5<sup>th</sup>), which will support giving both to parishes and to specific ministries that serve the larger community.*

Brief remarks from Ted Smith on Financial Matters :

*Ted offered further guidance regarding PPP loans and disbursement of those funds, as well as billing on insurance. Details will be posted on the Financial Matters area of the COVID-19 Resources of our website. Billing for insurance payments will be going out shortly. This is because if you have received a PPP loan, you can use that money for payroll and benefits costs. If you don't have a PPP loan, remember you have a 90 day grace period to pay these benefit bills from CPG.*

From Aisha and the Office of Missional Engagement:

*The Office of Missional Engagement has open virtual office hours every Wednesday from 2pm-3:30pm. You're invited to stop in to ask questions, brainstorm, or just to say hello. Reach out to Aisha for Zoom link at [ahuertas@thediocese.net](mailto:ahuertas@thediocese.net)*

Focus Presentation: Pastoral Care, especially TeleCare, in the time of COVID-19 by The Rev. David Niemeyer *[This is a rough transcript: a more full and properly footnoted version of this will follow.]*

*It may seem counterintuitive, but humor is helpful to work through some of our most challenging work of ministry these days. Humor is a gift of God even – and perhaps especially - in times of great difficulty.*

*Devices that we use to communicate have evolved tremendously. New forms of communication are being birthed at all times. But the more things have changed, the more they stay the same. Older forms of communication, like the telephone, can have a great impact in ministry. Welcome to this new form of ministry, no matter what tool you use.*

*As a past mentor has said: don't just do something, stand there! Be present. Ministry of presence is key no matter what the venue or medium: virtual visits are a very important part of our work today. It helps rebuild community. Pastoral care is morphing as well across many traditions. The "in-person" sense of it may have been ripped away from us in these days. Hospitals and retirement communities also are blocking visitors. It's difficult because we worry that we cannot be with our people face to face, because we are relational. That sense of connection is vital for the most vulnerable. That sense of personal connection may have been why we entered ministry in the first place. But know that all sorts of scriptural warrants are available to us for caring in a remote way, particularly for the most vulnerable – it preceded Christianity and was something that was – and is – a mandate of Judaism. When we shift into this angle of view of ministry, we understand that we cannot do pastoral care in the same way. It's difficult to imagine not doing it as we had done it before, but we must. We cannot violate quarantine, or create risk for those who are vulnerable. Is the function of Christian community to meet up or to care for one another? This is the test we now face. Things that have been routine are no longer in place – it's a priority shift as well as a methodology shift. We have a responsibility to our people, and that responsibility grows in a time like this.*

*Again, this challenge is not new. The story of Passover reminds us of the need for adaptability. The Israelites had to adapt to a new reality, whether by choice or circumstance. So, too, do we. Many are working from home, often with families in their space.*

*At St Mark's, I've engaged the congregation to help with this. Dropping a handwritten notes, texting, telephoning, running errands – there's a lot of desire on everyone's part for a sense of connectedness.*

*The needs are great and complex, even beyond our parishioners. Those who rely on hourly wages are particularly hurt in this pandemic. There is social stigma – sadly, often severe!- in being diagnosed with COVID-19. Because of the origination point of the virus, racist actions have occurred. Isolation is real, especially for those who do not have internet connectivity. Students may not have anywhere to go, nor any resources. These are communities that we can respond to following appropriate protective guidelines, in solidarity, love and pastoral care. There are opportunities to respond.*

*Some wisdom:*

- Here's a challenge with telephone contacts, particularly if a parishioner is calling another parishioner. There are a lot of scams out there these days. Parishioners, especially elderly ones, are rightly afraid of scammers. You might make sure that they know that there are people from the parish who might be calling to check on them, so they can trust.*
- Some people may not be interested in talking and others may be unable to stop. Consider politely letting them know if there are time constraints.*
- In parishioner-to-parishioner calls, the caller might flag any concerns to the priest.*
- We know that 90% of communication is body language but we can also convey much in our tone of voice. We are finding ways to compensate and sharpen our auditory skills.*

- *Re praying and anointing from afar: a theologian writes that there are certain mysteries in the body of Christ that defy our reasoning. I trust that Christ's hands can anoint when I cannot anoint. Per the Rev. Dr. Ruth Meyers of CDSP, the real presence is in tension with real absence in the Eucharist – Christ's presence is there mystically, not bodily. Real absence draws us forward to the time when we can be face to face. Social distancing makes us keenly aware of the connection of community and the shared presence of communion/community.*
- *Re Spiritual communion: Aquinas explains the ardent desire to receive him is equivalent to the physical reception. This suggests that the spiritual benefits can transcend physical presence, especially when it is desired but not possible. See BCP p 457 re spiritual communion. "All the benefits are received even though the sacrament is not received in the mouth."*
- *Tend to the things that help reduce anxiety, particularly relating to a lack of human connection. People will experience different levels of anxiety. It may recall previous trauma. Others may be fearful about family members.*
- *Be diligent about calling.*
- *Practice good active listening: offer compassion and a non-anxious pastoral presence.*
- *Create a pastoral care network in the parish.*
- *Provide extra care to families mourning death or unable to visit their family members they cannot be with.*
- *Follow the recommendations of hospitals or care facilities as well as the CDC.*
- *Remind families that memorial gatherings can happen later.*
- *Care and attention to medical personnel is also vital. Many will be isolated by excessive hours and cannot see their families. They may become sick themselves.*

*David cited VIPCare's prompting list for telecare (see attached.) Pastoral care is a two-way street: congregants want to do as much as they can to support their clergy and fellow parishioners. We are all pushing back on the cult of individualism; we realize more deeply than ever our own connectedness.*

## **Q&A**

### **Liturgy**

I want to begin planning for our worship on the Day of Pentecost and season beyond. I am wondering if we might be able to celebrate the Eucharist for spiritual communion by all if we are still under stay-home orders at that time. *You may do this for all at any time, following the same practices that we have seen so beautifully done at the National Cathedral. We know that some celebrants consume the Eucharist and some do not. Either practice is acceptable as long as you follow the rest of the guidelines.*

Do you expect that there might be a time where outdoor worship (six feet apart) might be allowed? What would those circumstances be? *Guidelines and checklists that we are developing do mention outdoor worship, with all those protocols in place. Watch for them!*

May we offer virtual visual experiences from our churchyards? *Please touch base with Bishop Goff directly to discuss this.*

What would be a good resource to explore the theology of Spiritual Communion? *The Rev. Dr. Ruth Myers from CDSP has a very deep theology of spiritual communion, explicated here, which you may find helpful: <https://cdsp.edu/2020/04/spiritual-communion-in-a-season-of-social-distancing/> From another*

*participant: I'd just add that it is the practice of real presence as the rule that gives any power to the exception of spiritual presence in communion or healing prayer. I think that's an important point to emphasize, because it names that humans need the real presence and we are only practicing spiritual presence out of the limitations of our circumstances because God is bigger than our rituals...and that it's not out of theological uncertainty.*

The Church of England is now offering a telephone line for 24/7 worship services and prayers. (See <https://mailchi.mp/churchofengland/over-6000-calls-in-the-first-48-hours-to-daily-hope-the-free-dial-in-worship-phone-line-amid-coronavirus-lockdown?e=a01c34f75a> ). Is the Diocese aware of any Anglican/Episcopal churches offering something similar within the Diocese or other USA locations so that we might offer these additional resources for our parishioners? *We are not aware of anything like that right now, but we'll do some research and get back to you. We do already have a list of online services in our diocese on our COVID-19 Virtual Worship resource page, where parishes who have shared their service schedules with us are listed. If your service is not listed and you want to do so, please do update our master sheet here:* [https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1xc1IH5D4wMC\\_RLA93RYBIA\\_XJbJfN03HZZxHsJZYW9M/edit#gid=0](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1xc1IH5D4wMC_RLA93RYBIA_XJbJfN03HZZxHsJZYW9M/edit#gid=0).

Are you referring to closing churches? *Well, in a way they are already closed since we are not having in-person worship nor are we streaming worship services from the sanctuary. [Therein followed a discussion of phased reopenings to protect the most vulnerable among us.]*

Will there be a communication from the Diocese regarding this planning of phasing back in? *This was addressed in the context of Bishop Susan's remarks.*

### **General Information**

Is Roslyn's recent announcement a foretelling of what other aspects of our diocesan life might look like for the remainder of 2020 or not? *We just don't know yet. All our related organizations are dealing with the same questions. We'll share more as they share their thoughts with us.*

We're hearing our bishops use various terminology in how they are addressed. What are your preferences? *From Bishop Susan: I'm fine with either Bishop Susan or Bishop Goff, or for those with whom I am particularly close, just Susan. From Bishop Jennifer: The same here!*

With today's notice from the Standing Committee, I wonder if clergy not associated with a specific parish might be considered for membership to the Standing Committee? *There is no requirement to be serving a parish ; any canonically resident clergy may run.*

From Bishop Susan:

*I'd remind you about the clergy retreat next week, on May 5<sup>th</sup>. There will be no clergy webinars next week unless there is breaking news. If so, we'd do Wednesday at 11 so as to keep the timeframe of the retreat intact, but as of right now, we encourage you to give your time to the retreat.*

From Bishop Jennifer:

*We are talking about future focus topics for these webinars and on May 19<sup>th</sup> we will be reflecting on the Great Commission in this time. We've heard lots of stories from parishes that their online attendance would greatly exceed what would fit in the building. Looking forward to hearing what you might have to say about this and what you'd like us to focus on. How can this be a moment for evangelism in this new situation and beyond? Please do let us know your thoughts on this and on other topics that might be helpful.*

Bishop Jennifer closed us in prayer.