

Clergy Webinar May 12 and 13, 2020

Bishop's Opening Prayer

From Treasurer Ted Smith: not much “new” news – we are waiting to hear the latest updates from SBA. We haven't yet heard from CPG about the pension deferments, but we're told we will hear today.

We will have a conversation Thursday at 11 am regarding being a cleric in a vulnerable category, per the CDC guidelines. What are the issues? How can we support one another? How do we serve our parishioners faithfully without putting ourselves or loved ones at risk? This will be an open discussion. All are welcome to attend this Zoom meeting, and information about how to participate will come shortly.

From diocesan Stewardship and Giving staff – Julie Simonton and Stephanie Gurnsey Higgins talked about their Wednesday evening and Thursday webinars on Stewardship and Giving. At the last webinar, Stephanie talked about the Giving Curve. She reprised the key points on our webinar today and also suggested that those who were not in attendance could review the program on YouTube [here](#). Additional articles and resources about the Giving Curve can be found [here](#). Next week the webinar will address best practices on Stewardship Ministries to continue or enhance now: continuing and enriching relationships over the next few months; key one-on-one strategic conversations, differences in how you might do the fall stewardship campaign, with a particular eye on the timing of your campaign vis-à-vis the giving curve.

Bishop Susan's remarks.

Phased Regathering Team Leader Reports

*Guidelines and Checklists Team* (The Rev. Canon Mary Thorpe): Our team is already hard at work, developing checklists and guidelines addressing several areas, including public health markers, demographics of the parish, issues relating to the physical facility, office and administrative matters, liturgy in the next phase, pastoral care, mission and ministry, fellowship, and formation. This diocese has many parishes, each unique in a number of different ways. We are working to construct something that will be flexible enough to be responsive to those differences but rigorous enough to provide clarity about how we live into this pandemic faithfully and wisely.

*Area Coaching Teams* (Bishop Jennifer Brooke-Davidson): We are developing teams of coaches in four areas of the diocese (NoVA, the western part of the diocese, the eastern part running from Fredericksburg eastward, and the southern part, including Richmond and Charlottesville). Each area will have a team of coaches to work alongside congregations to implement the guidelines. Using these coaches is not mandatory – they are there for you to use if you need them. They will be able to help with technical aspects, with the emotional and people parts (roadblocks, at risk and struggling to carry out ministry, theological.)

*Training for Coaches* in each area (The Very Rev. Fran Gardiner-Smith): our team will be providing training and coaching to the area coaches. We will prepare them to help parishes understand what the guidelines mean and what could they look like in different settings. As Bishop Jennifer said, we will help coaches guide parishes through the emotional stumbling blocks - how to respond if someone (or a whole parish) is sad/grieving or angry. We'll also be sure they're grounded in the theology that guides our work. Last but not least, they'll be helpers in engaging technology for this next phase of regathering.

*Petition Team* (The Very Rev. Randy Alexander): We view ourselves as an intermediate review stage between the proposal and the decision by the Bishop. We're there to help – if there's a problem we can help clergy and parishes to connect with area coaches or with parishes with similar profiles to come up with creative solutions that keep everyone safe and healthy.

## Q&A

### *LITURGY*

I have a graveside rite scheduled this Saturday. Will the 10 person limit still be in effect then? **Yes, it will be. What we are hearing is that one of the challenges in these services is keeping people physically distant from one another, so be prepared for it.**

What is the metric for knowing whether #2 of the public health indicators for Phase Two has been satisfied? In other words, how will we know when we're close? This has to do with **WIDESPREAD TESTING / CONTACT TRACING AVAILABLE TO TRACK THE SPREAD OF THE VIRUS. We expect that the Governor's office, the Virginia Department of Health, and our local health departments should be able to answer those questions.**

In our Q&A about the process of opening back up, can we have recommendations or suggestions as how to proceed for congregations that rent worship space? **We expect that if you are worshipping in a rented space that is a church, see what the protocol is for them to re-gather and see how it aligns with what we are putting out. It might be quite similar, and with a few tweaks would serve your host congregation as well as your own congregation. If you are renting space from a school, check with the school department staff to ascertain if others are using the space (even though the school is closed to students and teachers) and if so what their protocols are for cleaning, as well as considering what their expectations are of you. For other venues, check with your landlord as to what they are doing and what you are expecting to do.**

Are services allowed in the church front yard? **There should be no outdoor services yet.**

Bishop - are you saying that we won't regather until the most vulnerable can re-gather too? **In an ideal world, yes, because we always strive for full inclusion for all of our brothers and sisters, but in reality it will probably end up being somewhere in between. Not all of your parishioners may be ready to come back to church, having assessed their own risk. That's why it is important to continue offering online services of some kind. What we strive for is the minimizing of risk as much as possible, knowing that we will never be able to totally eliminate it.**

I am wondering if this clarity could be put on a YouTube that we could share with our Vestries and leaders. It would come across so much clearer than simply giving a printout of the Q&A of this gathering. **That's a good idea! There will be a letter very soon about our phased regathering and about the possibility of recording or livestreaming online worship from the sanctuary. We expect to put out a video of these topics later this week.**

Will we be permitted to once again record worship services in the sanctuary (with only essential personnel) once the governor's upcoming loosening of restrictions goes into effect? **See the Bishop's remarks: yes, with some clear and strong guidance on how it can be done.**

Do our Vestries need to vote on beginning to livestream again in our church buildings **That's up to you – you as priest have the authority to make that decision, but for some of you it might be wise to consult with the vestry, and in some cases, hold a vote on it.**

What about individual, pre-packaged, communion elements, or even individual communion cups (about a teaspoon with a few drops of the Blood)? **We will not be doing that at this point in time.**

What is the email address for sending in requests for permission to record or livestream from our sanctuary? **Please send your request to [bishopsoffice@thediocese.net](mailto:bishopsoffice@thediocese.net).**

For Eucharist, what would you advise for distribution when the remainder of the congregation are engaging in spiritual communion? **You have two options: one would be that the celebrant receives communion, but no one else does. The other is that no one receives. Even the celebrant fasts from reception of the sacrament in order to be as one with the community. Either one is acceptable.**

Thanks to all who are working so hard on the best path for traveling forward towards the future with caution and hope. I'm feeling better about everything. **Thank you; we're all on this journey together and everyone is working hard and doing amazing things.**

Morning Prayer or Liturgy of Holy Eucharist? **Either is acceptable. So is Antecomunion.**

How will we move from one phase to the next? **The Bishop will make that decision in consultation with the Phased Regathering team leaders.**

Now that the weather is getting better on a reliable basis, can we hold worship services outdoors? **Not at this point in time.**

Can our organist be one of three people (priest and videographer the others) livestreaming or recording and play organ music? **Assuming proper physical distancing and assuming that the organist, the priest or the videographer is not in one of the vulnerable groups, that would be acceptable.**

Should we do morning prayer service on line or Holy Eucharist? **You may do either. Antecomunion (Liturgy of the Word) is also an option.**

When will you have a definitive answer for weddings in July? **If this was planned as an in-the-sanctuary wedding, the likelihood that this would be possible is slim, particularly if there were to be a significant number of people. It would be impossible to meet physical distancing guidelines and music might also pose a challenge.**

If we already have planned 2 distanced people singing this Sunday outside, live streamed, may we do so? **Yes, as long as they abide by the necessary physical distancing and hygiene guidelines.**

Regarding singing groups for worship: there are ways electronically to synchronize singers who are each in separate places ... can we assume it would be okay to use this technology? **Yes, that's a great idea. Some are using singing video recordings of soloists or family groups, and then there's the magnificent 800 voice chorus that sang on Easter Sunday at the National Cathedral, all done virtually.**

(follow on question) Could you share your knowledge of this technology? I really want to do this!

[Here's](#) a good YouTube video talking about how one might do this.

I heard two numbers from the bishop: that 2 people could be present and at one point 10 could be present. Which is correct? **Ten people is the maximum for gatherings for pastoral offices like graveside services. Within the church for purposes of recording or livestreaming, the optimum is two.**

We are looking for some clarification with regard to singing. We understand that there is no congregational singing; that's completely understandable. Are we allowed to use a soloist at safe distance and are we allowed to chant the liturgy thank you. **The best practice right now is not to have singing by people when there are other people in the recording space. Another best practice we have seen used very effectively is to record offsite.**

What about in car worship in parking lots? **Per Bishop Susan, not yet.**

VTS is offering an e-formation day on June 3, and one component of that day is hybrid worship.

Given that our church is an older (1800s) building, we only have one handicapped accessible entrance. I expect we are not the only church with this issue. This limitation does not then allow us for one entrance and a separate exit. How do we then proceed? Will there be exceptions? **There are a number of considerations here. Is there some way to make space for folks who need to enter/exit because of accessibility issues? Can you arrange for them to come at a specific time prior to the service so they have the time and space they need to be able to go through in a way that doesn't violate the six-foot distance rules? We know that many parishes don't have the ability to have separate entrances and exits, so a way to manage traffic flow, and perhaps wipe down those through-areas before, during, and after a service might be a reasonable approach. Another question is the nature of the disability. If someone has a movement/accessibility disability and might also fall into one of the vulnerable categories per the CDC's [guidance](#), attendance at church might actually be too risky for them. Getting a sense of what your**

parishioners who need accommodation are themselves thinking about coming back to church would be a wise pastoral move here. For those that feel ready to return, there may be no way to perfectly apply the guidance vis-à-vis access and distancing, but do as much as is reasonable and jointly decide with your parishioner if that will work.

How would you rate the chance of in-person worship on Pentecost May 31? Given that we are two weeks away from May 31<sup>st</sup> and the teams are just developing the process of approval for re-gathering, it seems very unlikely.

Currently, the date set for re-opening the Diocese of VA is June 10. Do you imagine extending that deadline? Do you have any sense on where we will be around June 10? Many dioceses around the country are extending to July 1. We are following the development of our Phased Regathering Program that we've described to you. We hope to have the full plan available to you by mid-June, knowing that it will take a little time after its rollout for you to address the items on the checklists, to get additional guidance from area coaches if necessary, and to submit it for approval to the Bishop's Office. We're also aware that the timing of your regathering is very much based on your particular congregation and locale. The Governor revised his initial "Phase 1(a) loosening" when local leaders said the risk was too high in their locale. Consider that if your congregation is not feeling ready, you do not have to move forward until you do feel ready.

In Phase 2 of "Turning Toward the Future," it says we must still provide virtual worship.

How long will we need to provide virtual worship services after we begin regathering?

Virtual worship continues, and should (ideally) continue forever! It's proven to be a wonderful tool for evangelism. Yes, it's hard work, but the creativity we have seen around the diocese has been marvelous and it's yielded remarkable results in terms of engaging newcomers.

### *NON-LITURGICAL QUESTIONS*

If we are not expecting to be gathered in our churches without masks until a vaccine is available, what does that mean about our pre-school (100 kids) and start-up in the fall? Would they follow church gathering guidelines or state and county guidelines? It's too early for us to speak fully about the fall re-opening, but the best thing you can do right now is to gather information: what is the guidance you're receiving from your local health officials, what are other schools doing, what questions do you and your board need answers to before you make a final decision? That way, as the beginning of the school year gets closer, you'll have what you need to make a wise and well-considered decision.

Same question about our outdoor Octoberfest, food and games and such. Any thoughts? Again, it's a little too soon to know. As above, gather information so you can make a decision that's wise.

I am writing to ask if the Bishop has a view on church-run op shops. We share an op shop with a sister church and we are inclined to delay opening it until we have a process in place. Do you agree? Yes, you should have a process. Compare notes with your sister church about what process and procedures they are considering. It would be best if you were both on the same page before you consider opening.

(Referring to the Giving Curve Webinar) What if there was no bump for us but for all of the nonprofits around us? **Please do check in with Julie Simonton and Stephanie Higgins for guidance. [jsimonton@thediocese.net](mailto:jsimonton@thediocese.net) and [shiggins@thediocese.net](mailto:shiggins@thediocese.net)**

For those who have/will be hiring new, soon to be transitional deacons, is there a sense of when they might be ordained and how that might take place? **We are working on that and will let you know soon.**

Any updates from Shrine Mont? **Not yet. Their Board meeting is on Friday. We expect there will be more news from them and from Shrine Mont Camps within the next week or so.**

We rent space to a non-profit. Do the same rules apply for the common spaces they use in our building? **Yes, please.**

Any word on Shrine Mont? **We hope to hear more sometime next week.**

What kinds of things might we begin discussing/planning with our church leaders at this point? Or is it too soon? **It's not too soon to start wondering or imagining. For example, if you haven't already done the exercise of measuring your space to determine how many you could accommodate in person in your space given the 6 ft requirement. Some churches have discovered that the number at any one service is actually very low. Some are choosing not to regather if only a fraction could come at any one time. Others are imagining ways of reconfiguring to address that element.**