



Dear People, Neighbors, and Friends of St. John's,

In obedience to the godly counsel of the Episcopal Bishop of Rhode Island, public worship at St. John's is suspended until further notice.

The church building itself will remain open from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Sundays and from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. on all other days, seven days a week.

I remain available via phone, text, or email at 401-500-0042 or rector@saintjohns-newport.org. I deeply appreciate those of you who have checked in to assure me of your safety and that you have supports in place. Should you want to connect with a church member or with me to set up a regular time to check in until the situation returns to normal, or for any reason whatsoever, please be in touch with me.

The Bishop was in touch with the clergy this afternoon, writing, "Today the Governor requested that Rhode Islanders stay home from church services this weekend and the Director of the Department of Health called upon clergy to cancel church services. These appeals are in addition to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's guideline which asks, 'organizations that serve high-risk populations to consider canceling events of more than 10 people,' and states that anyone over the age of 60 is considered high risk. I therefore strongly recommend that clergy cancel worship services for tomorrow. Given the gravity of the situation, this may become mandatory in the coming week. I urge all Episcopalians at risk to consider the needs of the entire community and avoid doing anything that would put an undue burden on our health care system in a time of pandemic."

The Bishop referred us to the following link for further information:

* <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/community-mitigation-strategy.pdf>

I am grateful to the Bishop for his leadership at this difficult time. While we would all prefer to gather in prayer and fellowship, prudence dictates otherwise. I do commend to you all the Great Litany and the Supplication, which may be found online here:

<https://www.bcponline.org/GreatLitany/Litany.html>.

In addition, you may want to take advantage of one or more of the many online resources for worship, some of which are included on the Diocese of Rhode Island's website here:

<https://www.episcopalri.org/worship-at-home/>.

Of special note, the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C. will be broadcasting a service at 11 a.m. on Sunday, a link to which is available at the above-mentioned resource page. (I know it's not St. John's, so I do hope you will not judge the cathedral too harshly by our own standards, the rector wrote facetiously...)

Further updates will be issued as warranted, but I do not plan on inundating your inbox. Do feel free to be in touch, however, and for my part I will make every effort to check in electronically with many of you.

Yours in Christ's service,

N.J.A. Humphrey+
XIV Rector
