



## A PASTORAL DIRECTIVE FROM BISHOP REED *for worship in extraordinary circumstances*

“May the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing through the power of the Holy Spirit.” *Romans 15:13*

To the Clergy and People of the Diocese of Fort Worth,

I want to begin by sharing a letter from Archbishop Beach on behalf of the College of Bishops of the Anglican Church in North America.

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Jesus Christ,

We serve a faithful and loving God, and He has called us to serve Him in challenging times. The coronavirus continues to spread across the globe, and while many despair and are living in fear, we have hope and peace because in Jesus Christ we



know how the story ends. This has not taken the Lord by surprise, and it gives us an incredible opportunity to live in faith toward God, in love toward our neighbors, and in service toward our communities.

I write to you after meeting with our bishops this afternoon. We considered the advice given by the President of the United States' Coronavirus Team, the Centers for Disease Control, the Public Health Agency of Canada, and by governmental authorities in Canada, Mexico, and the United States strongly advising that no public gatherings of 10 or more people be held. It is our desire to partner with our civic officials as they seek to exercise their duty to protect our communities. Therefore, the College of Bishops is asking our congregations not to hold in-person worship services or gatherings until further notice, but to offer, when possible, worship services on a virtual platform. We realize these are extreme measures that we had hoped to avoid, but for the health and welfare of everyone in our churches and communities, this is something we all must put into practice immediately.

Each diocesan bishop will communicate to his diocese regarding the specifics of how this will be applied in each local diocesan context.

Let us continue to pray for one another, the people we serve, and the communities in which we live.

*Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go. (Joshua 1:9, ESV).*

Faithfully in Jesus Christ,

+ Handwritten signature of Jay J. Beach in black ink.

The Most Rev. Dr. Foley Beach  
*Archbishop and Primate, Anglican Church in North America*

My brothers and sisters, let me emphasize the Archbishop's quote of Joshua. As the children of God, now is a time to "be strong and courageous." We must also be ready to step out boldly in the love of Christ. This time reminds me of the accounts of yellow fever outbreaks of the 1870s and 1880s. As followers of Jesus, we must be willing to step up for the Gospel and provide for the sick, the suffering, and for those who have departed this life.

The Directive below is an attempt to approach this day with wisdom and care for our neighbors, while at the same time honoring our Lord and the work of the Church. Also in this message, I am offering some ideas on how we can continue the ministry of Christ in our neighborhoods while sustaining the ministry of the Church.

The command that our Lord used more than any other in the Gospel narratives were these words: "Do not be afraid." St. Paul reminds us in Romans 8 that there is nothing in this universe, not even life or death, that can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. If you are anxious today, take time to re-read those words.

For the time being, I have restricted office hours at the Diocesan Center to 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on weekdays. A few staff members will be present each day to perform essential tasks. Out of an abundance of caution, all visitors are discouraged. Please call 817-244-2885 for assistance during open hours, or to leave a message.

At this time, I encourage all of us to keep our eyes focused on Jesus. Pray the Daily Office with your family at home. On Sundays, join our virtual community online for observe of the Eucharist and make your own spiritual communion as outlined in the BCP 2019 on page 242. [A [table of resources](#) is available on the diocesan Web site. It will be updated as new information is received.] Finally, be prepared to demonstrate God's love in whatever way you may be called.

May God bless us and protect us.

***The Rt Rev. Ryan S. Reed***

The Feast of St. Joseph

### **Bishop Reed's Pastoral Directive**

1. I strongly recommend that all Rectors and Vicars enforce social distancing as recommended by the CDC by offering the Eucharist on a virtual platform or in groups of less than 10 persons, with the necessary precautions being observed. We will provide a resource page where Sunday worship can be observed online. Churches that are offering Morning Prayer are encouraged to use online platforms as well.
2. Beginning today, March 19, 2020, I am Dispensing with the Obligation of our members to make their Communion until at least April 2, 2020.
3. All non-essential meetings are to be postponed until after Palm Sunday, April 5. Church support staff are encouraged to work from home as much as possible.
4. The Diocesan office will continue operations with a minimal staff, and the door will be locked during the day for safety reasons. Essential business will continue being conducted.
5. Baptisms can be done in emergency situations, but please keep me informed by email or phone call.
6. Burials must be graveside only and with as limited a family presence as possible with priest or deacon leading the prayers.
7. No weddings may take place without my consent and will require limitations for safety.

### **What can I do right now?**

- First, follow the advice of health officials. Instructions vary in different communities,

but everyone should stay home as much as possible and take other precautions. Even if you never feel sick, it is possible for you to pass this virus to others.

- Second, exercise your ministry as a disciple of Jesus by checking on your neighbors, senior and at-risk members of your congregation, and family members located in other parts of the country. Set up a daily check-in with your neighbors and vulnerable friends – just a text or wave out the window will do!
- Third, there is a severe need for blood donations. Food banks and “meals on wheels” may also be needing assistance in the coming days. Donations to these programs are always welcome.
- Fourth, continue to give to your parish as you are able, and give also to your rector’s benevolence fund as needs will be many in the coming weeks. You can keep up your pledge by mail, or make use of an online contribution system if your parish has one.
- And finally, pray. Pray for God power to intervene in this crisis. Pray for our nation to repent and to turn to God for help. Pray for your family, your neighbors, and the Church.

### Stay informed

Tonight, March 19, two hourlong reports will air to help us all understand facts about COVID-19 and the responses of our civilian leaders. Viewing is optional. Both will be posted online by the broadcasters.

- **WFAA-TV (Channel 8)** will present a town hall with local leaders, including Dallas County Judge Clay Jenkins and Fort Worth Mayor Betsy Price, at 6 p.m.
- **PBS (Channel 13)** will present a national update, Confronting Coronavirus, at 7 p.m.

*This message has been sent to all clergy and lay leaders.  
Please share it with other members of your parish.*