



March 15, 2020

The Third Sunday of Lent

And hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured into our hearts...—Romans 5:5

Dear Friends;

Today I think that we need to address the threat of the COVID 19 (Corona virus). We must reflect on how we as disciples of Jesus must express our love of God and neighbor. The manner in which we care for all our members of our community—especially the elderly and vulnerable—we are carrying out our mission.

Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors declared a local health emergency. The Contra Costa Health Services have given guidelines to slow or stop the spread of the virus. Since there is no vaccine or treatment for the virus the best defense is social distancing (keeping at an arms distance from others). That means limiting circumstances where one might come into contact with the virus. They recommend large events be canceled.

We at St Anne will be implementing protocols to promote the health of our members.

- Continue practicing good hygiene—wash hands often and avoid touching your face.
- Avoid hand to hand contact during the sign of peace (a bow or hand over heart works) and the Lord's Prayer (here use hands held up)
- If you are sick, are over fifty, or in a high risk group (compromised immune system) remain home.
- We strongly urge that the Eucharist Bread be received in the hand and not the tongue; this is for the same reason we are urged not to touch our faces; the openings of eyes, ears, nose and mouth can be corridors to disease. Not to receive on the tongue protects the recipient from pathways to illness. Though our bishop wants to maintain that option.
- We will no longer be distributing the Precious Blood of Christ to everyone. However lest we forget that Jesus commanded us to eat AND drink we will ask the Eucharistic ministers of cup to come up and each will receive from an individual cup. They will then stand in their normal positions. We ask then that you come up and reverence the cup with the Eucharistic Blood of Christ with a bow of the head. Then return to your place.
- Leave space between you and the people around you.
- We have canceled large events until further notice

There is no need to get be afraid or panic. There are a lot of unknowns but we also know a lot about how to limit a pandemic. We just need to exercise common sense. Jesus tells us over and over again in the Gospels not to be afraid. Things will be difficult for a while but we will get through this. The important thing is that we recognize our need to stay in touch with each other. We must maintain the bonds of love especially with the elderly and those who live alone. We do not want anyone to be forgotten in this time.

I want to end with a quote from one of my favorite psalms, Psalm 27.

*The Lord is my light and my help;
Before whom shall I fear?
...I am sure I shall see the Lord's goodness
In the land of the living.
Hope in him, hold firm and take heart.
Hope in the Lord!*

Peace,

Fr Ron

Esta carta está en español en el sitio web: www.stannechurchbyron.com