



The Episcopal Diocese of Bethlehem

March 19, 2020

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Message From Bishop Kevin: Call to Suspend Worship Through Easter



Dear people of God,

After careful consideration of the advice given by government and healthcare professionals, as well as [Presiding Bishop Michael Curry](#) and other local bishops and faith leaders, I am compelled to call upon all churches in the diocese to continue to suspend in-person gatherings of any size, including worship, through Holy Week and Easter at the earliest (April 12, 2020).

Holy Week and Easter are central to our Christian faith. To not gather to commemorate Christ's triumphant entrance into Jerusalem, the last supper where he instituted the sacrament of his Body and Blood, his condemnation and tragic death on the cross, and his conquering of death and rising to new life-this will be an immense sacrifice. However, it also offers us an opportunity to reimagine how we "do church," to expand the various ways we can gather together, even as we are physically separated. Sadly, we must remain physically distant from one another now, as it is distance that minimizes the risk of illness and helps to preserve, not only our own health, but especially the health of the most vulnerable in our communities.

Rest assured that this distance need not lead to isolation and loneliness. Our diocese is working to offer online worship and faith-sharing opportunities so that we might remain connected, and can continue to pray, worship, and learn together-to laugh, cry, and be joyful together-even if that means we must re-think what it means to be "together" in these times. I encourage you to [check our website](#) frequently to stay up-to-date with worship and other opportunities that are being offered throughout the diocese. I also encourage you to reach out in love to others who may be struggling, and to reach out for help when you are struggling yourself.

I will continue to send regular messages and be in touch with clergy and other leaders in the diocese. Know of my prayers for each and every one of you, and my confidence that we will emerge from this time of sacrifice with deepened love for one another, and for Christ who died for us, and rose again.

In God's love,

+Kevin

Bishop of Bethlehem

[Read this message on the diocesan website.](#)

Bishop to Preach at Livestreamed Service: March 22 at 10am

Bishop Kevin will be preaching at a Morning Prayer service which will be livestreamed from the Cathedral Church of the Nativity on Sunday, March 22 at 10am. [Here is the link where the livestream will be found.](#)

Please note that the service can only be "attended" via livestream, NOT IN-PERSON. Thank you for helping us protect the most vulnerable in our communities.

Forming Children's Faith At Home



Carly Greenwald of [St. Gabriel's](#) in Douglasville has invited anyone who is interested to join the Facebook group, *St. Gabe's Kids Rock*. There she will post fun activities, helpful resources, and kid-friendly prayers. You can [request access to the group here](#).

You can also check out [Illustrated Ministry's website](#), which has tons of resources for faith formation for children, as well as [this list of resources](#) compiled by Joy Owensby, the Missioner for Formation and Community Engagement for the Episcopal Church in Western Louisiana.

Closures and Cancellations



All churches in the diocese have ceased all gatherings through at least April 12. Employees may continue to work remotely. Please [contact the diocesan office](#) if you have any questions or need assistance.



Embracing the Full Household of God (previously scheduled for March 28) has been cancelled. Stay tuned for future opportunities.



This year's Chrism Mass (previously scheduled for April 2) has been cancelled. Stay tuned for future opportunities. Please [contact the Rev. Megan Dembi](#) if you are in urgent need of oils.

Be Aware of Coronavirus Scams

Be aware that individuals and groups are using the current concerns surrounding the coronavirus to take advantage of vulnerable people. ***If someone calls claiming to be from the government, and asks for payment, social security number, credit card number, or bank information in order to send you funds, it is a scam.*** To get the latest information about coronavirus scams, [visit the FTC's official page](#) on the topic.



Virtual AA Meetings Available



Many AA groups are no longer able to meet in-person due to restrictions surrounding the coronavirus. Please spread the word that virtual AA meetings are available on [the e-AA website](#).

Upcoming Events

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- May 9 [Spring Event](#)
June 21-27 [Grace House Youth & Young Adult Mission Trip](#)
July 7-11 [Episcopal Youth Event \(EYE\) 2020](#)

[Visit the website calendar](#) for a full list of upcoming events in the Diocese of Bethlehem.

People of Bethlehem

Though we generally highlight Bethlehem residents in this section of the newsletter, today we honor the life of someone whose ministry was outside the bounds of our diocese. The Rt. Rev. Barbara C. Harris, the first woman to be ordained and consecrated a bishop in the worldwide Anglican Communion, and who served as suffragan bishop in the Diocese of Massachusetts, died on March 13. Learn more about Harris and her extraordinary life by clicking the image below. May she rest in peace and rise in glory.



EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF MASSACHUSETTS PHOTO: DAVID ZADIG
The Rt. Rev. Barbara C. Harris, at her historic consecration service on Feb. 11, 1989.

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