



# CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER

## SPECIAL EDITION

### MARCH 16, 2020

## WE'RE DOING OUR PART TO STOP THE SPREAD OF ILLNESS

- ◆ Church of the Redeemer is CLOSED starting today through Sunday March 29, 2020.
- ◆ We are maintaining our office hours for the purposes of receiving telephone calls and picking up the mail. Pastor Melinda is willing to preside over a home communion. Call the office to arrange.
- ◆ Our office hours are Monday and Wednesday 8:00 a.m. until noon. Tuesday and Thursday 12:30 p.m. until 4:30 p.m.
- ◆ If you have a pastoral emergency, call Pastor Melinda at the church during office hours, at home 570-890-9054 or by cell (703) 927-6159. As of this writing, she is still allowed access to the hospital but not nursing homes.
- ◆ The Vestry has set up a calling tree to check on all of our regular worshippers. If you haven't heard from us within the week, please DO call the office and let us know how you are.
- ◆ We DO have a corps of volunteers willing to run errands such as going to the drug store or grocery store, call the office if you have this need. (Also call if you'd like to volunteer for this task.)
- ◆ We continue to worship together via technology. Join us on line Wednesday at 12:05 p.m. Saturday at 5:15 p.m. and Sunday 11:00 here:
- ◆ <https://www.facebook.com/redeemersayre> (you do not need to be a Facebook member to view)
- ◆ Our Lenten Book group WILL meet via an internet meeting platform. Members will be contacted with a link.
- ◆ The following events/activities will NOT be held during this two week period:
  - ◆ Strong Women—Strong Bones
  - ◆ Taking Off Pounds Sensibly (TOPS)
  - ◆ Boy and Cup Scouts
  - ◆ Sunday School
  - ◆ Worship (except via livestream)
- ◆ Read the Bishop's message, next page.

## Message from Bishop Kevin: Suspend All Operations, Including Worship

Dearly beloved of God,

The health and safety of the people of the diocese is my top priority, and as people of faith, we must be willing to sacrifice in order to care for those in our communities. Through the course of the past few weeks, we have learned that one of the necessary steps to help stop the spread of coronavirus is to avoid large gatherings of people when at all possible. Governor Wolf has asked religious leaders to help stop the spread of this illness. And though many of our churches do not constitute “large gatherings,” they are often filled with people at higher risk of developing severe symptoms from the coronavirus.

After consulting with medical professionals and the Standing Committee, for the public good and to protect the most vulnerable people in our communities, I have made the difficult decision to call on all churches in the diocese to cease all operations, including worship, from Monday, March 16, to Monday, March 30. The Chrism Mass scheduled for April 2 has been cancelled as well. We will reevaluate proper next-steps throughout this timeframe, and will update you by Friday, March 27 if the situation changes. Clergy (or Senior Wardens where no clergy serve) may choose to also suspend worship for this Sunday, March 15. This decision does not apply to schools or other organizations that operate out of churches, which should analyze their contexts and use their expertise to decide how to respond to the current situation. I would be happy to offer support to any such organization that is looking for further guidance.

I have the greatest respect and trust for the clergy and wardens in this diocese. Please listen to their guidance and take care of yourselves and the most vulnerable in your communities.

We will also create a list of other parishes which offer livestream [on our website](#). I also commend to your viewing [the 11am Eucharist on March 15](#) which will be lead by Presiding Bishop Michael Curry. Though we will not be able to worship in-person, it is important for us to gather, even virtually, to worship God, and to remember that we continue to be a community of faith during these trying times.

I know that these changes will be difficult for some, both emotionally and practically. Know that [I and others on diocesan staff](#) are here to support you in whatever ways we can.

In God’s love,

The Rt. Rev. Kevin D. Nichols  
Bishop of Bethlehem

## RESOURCES:

### Center for Disease Control

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>

### Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Department of Public Health

<https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/Pages/Coronavirus.aspx>

### Book of Common Prayer (on line)

<https://www.bcponline.org/>

Please DO take the time to pray each day. You will find Daily Devotions for Individuals and Families starting on page 137 of the Book of Common Prayer. Please DO pray for those on our prayer list (you'll need a bulletin for that) You can also find daily Scripture readings here:

<http://satucket.com/lectionary/>

The following prayer may be said for those in our medical community:

Sanctify, O Lord, those whom you have called to the study and practice of the arts of healing, and to the prevention of disease and pain. Strengthen them by your life-giving Spirit that by their ministries the health of the community may be promoted and creation glorified; through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
AMEN. (BCP 460)