



Dear Brothers and Sisters of Immanuel:

I am deeply grateful for the many messages of thanks about our virtual, online services. We can all agree that they are certainly not what we are used to, but they seem to have met some needs. However, I am writing to let you know that our Bishop has decided that we may not livestream, record, or broadcast from the church buildings throughout the Diocese after Easter Sunday. This is an effort to live into and model more effectively Governor Northam's stay-at-home directive. The Bishop's decision is also made in light of predictions that the coronavirus has not yet peaked in our area, and we are concerned for the welfare of those producing the services and for the protection of the most vulnerable among us. What does this mean for us? Is this the end of all worship until June 10th, the current end-date for the Governor's directive?

It certainly is not. I will, God help me (and us!), be livestreaming some sort of worship from the Rectory. I am envisioning this as a large Zoom meeting to encourage broader participation, combined with conversation and our virtual coffee hours, assigned readers for the lessons, different preachers, etc., etc. I just learned of this decision today, so this is in no way fully formed. I am convinced, though, that God will show up. And many of you will show up. And we will laugh, and perhaps cry, maybe sing, and listen, and pray together. Maybe we can include some sort of music, as well.

I am so grateful to our many deeply creative, resilient folks in our communications ministry, who have already had to learn, time and again, how to make lemonade from lemons. I thank particularly Mark Fearer, Scott Hovis, Brooke Roberts, John Bednar, Candy Levin, and Sandra Graham, our Vestry steward for communications.

But in the meantime, Holy Week and Easter are upon us, and these days rightfully claim our attention, our devotion, and our best. As I said in the sermon on Palm Sunday, this will be a very, very different Holy Week than probably most of us have experienced. But God is constant, and the world-shaking Resurrection faith that we proclaim and by which we live our lives is not changed or altered in the slightest. Please see below for the full schedule of our Holy Week and Easter observances this year. Let's engage this level of virtual worship we are able to experience while we yet can.

I miss you. I miss our worship. And God knows I miss the Eucharist. Yet we will get through this. I can only imagine some of the worship and times of reunion that await us. I can see it in full Immanuel style! And I can also imagine that we will be wiser people for having gone through this time together, hopefully more thankful people, more reverent people, more joyful people, and more focused on what really matters.

God bless you all,

*Randy*