



EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE ANNUNCIATION

— our doors are open for everyone —

“Walk while you have the light, so that the darkness may not overtake you. If you walk in the darkness, you do not know where you are going. While you have the light, believe in the light, so that you may become children of light.” (John 12:35-36a)

Pastoral letter in response to coping with COVID-19 Pandemic in its second year

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ! COVID-19 continues to wreak havoc on this nation, and the world; and certainly has affected how we gather as people of God. I reference the above passage as it speaks to the very essence of who we are as children of God in dark times. I have been angry, challenged, despondent, frustrated, perplexed, resentful and plain ole worn out with the continuance of COVID-19. “When will it end?” This seems to be a common question asked when it comes to our daily life in the midst of trying to live our lives. We have been through so much this past year, and attendance is down 50% from where we were in March of 2020. Not being able to see one another, fellowship and worship together has been extremely agonizing in many ways. But we are children of the light and we must continue to believe and walk in the light!

Many of the policies put in place by the diocese and ECA have been enacted so that we may live out faithfully our love and care for one another in the midst of a contagious and deadly virus. These choices are not made easily, and come with a great amount of anxiety and sacrifice in how we know to be the “Church.” Here are some of the things we continue to do in order to walk in the light: we have continued with our in-person worship (with masks on), as well as providing an on-line worship service each Sunday. Members can participate in the Adult Christian Education class outside under the pavilion and via Zoom. We have limited activities that are taking place to ensure accountability and safety, all the while, providing for the necessary means to accomplish the ministry and mission of the parish. Sadly though, we are still unable to do many things we have done in the past and anxiously await the right time to implement more activities in the life of the parish.

We are looking for volunteers who would like help with our children & youth Christian education classes as soon as we are able to start up safely for all. We look forward to holding more parish life events and are currently planning one a month to be enjoyed outside under the pavilion. We know many parish members have chosen to minimize social contacts and we continue to pray for all those are not able to attend. The good news in the midst of all the disruptions in our parish life is that we have been able to keep everyone safe who has attended in-person events, and have had no recorded cases of transmission resulting from our gatherings. This is good news indeed and reinforces that we are doing the necessary things to keep us healthy and safe during these uncertain times. As always, we are ready and willing to help any parish members with the needs you may have. We continue to offer meals for those who would like them, offer ride assistance to anyone who may need transportation to worship, church activities and appointments, and continue to administer home communion for those who desire it. ECA will continue to faithfully provide fellowship, pastoral care, and worship opportunities to the members of this parish. Please do not hesitate to call me with any needs you may have and thank you for continuing to financially support ECA and our mission and ministry to the community. We will soon be entering our stewardship season. Our focus this year -- “Every Perfect Gift” -- describes how any gift we receive, no matter the amount, is a perfect gift. Thank you all for your love, prayers and support during the last year and a half. We hope that soon we will be able to get back to the fellowship and worship together that truly feeds our souls and sustains us. To God be the glory and may we bask in the light of Christ!

In Christ, Fr. Paul+

*“Our Mission is to bear witness to God’s love and invite, encourage,
and prepare God’s people to share that grace with others.”*