

Dear Clergy Colleagues and people of faith,

“And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”

— *Hebrews 10:24-25*

The year 2020 has certainly called us to pay attention in a variety of ways — attention to our cleanliness, to where we go, to those with whom we interact, to the value of basic necessities, and so on. It has also been a year for us to examine and reimagine both how we express and experience our faith and what it means to live out our faith in community.

And, this year, community has become even more vitally important. We have rallied together for justice, bonded together to educate our children, weathered a political storm, creatively joined in worship and care for one another. Collectively and intentionally, we have reached out to one another to assuage the emotional and spiritual weariness wrought by the pandemic and the rest.

As you can imagine, community has been critically important to healthcare workers on the frontlines of the COVID-19 pandemic. We have relied on our strength as a team to care for our patients and one another. Everyone is filling a vital role, to help prevent illness and to bring healing to those who need it. Not only have our physicians and nurses gone above and beyond, so have our respiratory therapists, lab employees, pharmacists, social workers, environmental and nutrition services, engineering techs, chaplains, administrators, and so many more. We are supporting one another, and yet healthcare workers are weary.

When the pandemic was new, people thought it would only last a month or two; do you remember when we talked about being back to in-person church activities by Easter? In those days, celebrities, politicians, and civic leaders of all sorts visited our hospitals to express thanks and solidarity with the hospitals' doctors, nurses, and staffs. These days seem ancient, now. As the pandemic stretches on, the spirit-lifting accolades and applause have grown increasingly silent. Our health-care team is tired. They need to know the KC Metro community still appreciates all they are going through, all they are giving of themselves.

This truth leads us to seek your help. We are asking you to help us acquire expressions of support. Will you help us cover the walls of St. Luke's Health System facilities with letters, cards, and posters conveying uplifting and appreciative messages. These would be a true gift for all who work for Saint Luke's Health System.

As important as these messages will be, knowing the wider community is helping us to prevent further spread of this virus will speak volumes to the staff. We encourage congregations and individuals alike to sign a pledge to wear masks and take all necessary precautions to prevent the continued spread of COVID-19. Send pictures of yourselves wearing masks, send a copy of your signed pledge. Healthcare providers are working tirelessly with no real end in sight. A pledge such as this can provide them with some hope that this will end. It will help them know more clearly that you recognize all that they have given of themselves, the hours, the spiritual, moral, and emotional distress, the sleep deprivation, and the isolation.

We are called to love God and love our neighbors as ourselves. Let's shower these extraordinary healing servants with love.

In Christ,

Susan⁺

The Rev. Susan Roberts
Director of Spiritual Wellness,
Saint Luke's Health System

In service with you,

⁺Bishop Marty

The Rt. Rev. Martin S. Field
VIIIth Bishop of West Missouri

Note: Pledges, posters, cards, letters, pictures for any or all Saint Luke's hospitals may be sent to:

c/o The Rev. Susan Roberts
Spiritual Wellness Department
4401 Wornall Road,
Kansas City, MO 64111
