



From the Bishop

The Right Reverend Cathleen Chittenden Bascom
Tenth Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Kansas

March 20, 2020

Dear beloved members of the Diocese of Kansas:

As Bishop of Kansas, I am simultaneously heartbroken and heartened as I share with you the news that **in-person Holy Week and Easter services, as well as other church gatherings and services through May 17th, need to be suspended.**

The following guidance came from Presiding Bishop Michael Curry on Tuesday:

“Last week I stated publicly my support for bishops who, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, decide ‘for a designated period of time . . . to cancel in-person gatherings for public worship.’ **I write now concerning the need to suspend in-person gatherings for public worship, in most contexts, during the sacred time of Holy Week and Easter Day.** Because this is a global health crisis, the principles in this letter apply throughout the Episcopal Church.” (The link to the Bishop Curry’s full statement can be read here: <https://episcopalchurch.org/posts/publicaffairs/presiding-bishop-michael-currys-word-church-holy-week-and-easter-day-2020-online>)

In the past two days I have talked with clergy and lay leaders of the diocese about how we can proceed. While heartbroken about the loss of in-person worship over these Holy Days, I am heartened by the things we will be doing to continue to be the Body of Christ bound together, keeping the Paschal Mystery despite our current limitations:

1. A worship service booklet for **the Diocese of Kansas Easter Vigil and Easter Feast 2020** will be sent by mail to every household in the diocese for whom we have a mailing address. Along with a candle and matches and whatever food you or your family might have for the first feast of Easter, it will allow you to celebrate the Great Vigil of Easter along with more than 8,000 other Episcopalians in our part of Kansas. We will worship our loving God, remembering the story of salvation and Jesus’ death and resurrection, while keeping one another safe in this time of isolation.
2. Also, this same liturgy will be recorded, with each part led by a different leader from across our diocese. Links to it will be available on the website of the diocese (www.episcopal-ks.org) and Grace Cathedral (<http://www.gracecathedraltopeka.org/>).

Anytime the evening of Saturday, April 11 (Easter Eve) or morning of Sunday, April 12 (Easter Day), you are invited to open the worship booklet and begin the service using your own candle as a Paschal Candle. You then can turn on the broadcast and participate along with the rest of the service. You then are invited to move your candle near whatever food you will use to celebrate, saying the included Easter blessings.

More details will follow soon, but in the meantime, always remember:

Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again!

You are all in my prayers, and we know that the Risen One walks with us,
+Cathleen

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