



A Pastoral Directive from the Episcopal Bishops of Michigan

March, 17, 2020

Dear Friends,

With heavy hearts and hope-filled spirits, we are compelled to offer a new Pastoral Directive in response to COVID-19. These new directives are in line with the recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

In addition to continuing to forgo all public, in-person worship services, we direct you to cease all other Sunday, Saturday and weekday in-person gatherings, including weddings, funerals, memorial services, and non-emergency baptisms, and place all of the groups that gather at your congregation on hiatus for the CDC's recommended eight weeks, or until May 10th, including both Holy Week and Easter. We encourage you to make arrangements to offer your education classes or other meetings by video or phone conference call as you are able. Food pantries and feeding programs should operate in a "curbside only" capacity.

As Bishops, we make these directives so that the Episcopal Church across Michigan may lead our state in caring for our communities by embodying pastorally sensitive physical distancing practices. The more physical distance we place between ourselves and our neighbors, the more we help to mitigate the spread and impact of this virus. At the same time, we are called to reach out to each other in love, so that while we are physically separated, we are spiritually and relationally connected. The Body of Christ is more than what happens inside of our buildings - it is a people living the Way of Love wherever we may be.

God of Life, you give us life and hope. Be with us in the chaos of this time. Calm our fears, be the light for our path, and strengthen our trust in your promise never to leave or forsake us. We pray through Christ, in the power of your Holy Spirit. Amen.

- *A Prayer for Chaotic Times, Enriching Our Worship*

In Christ,

The Rt. Rev. Wayne M. Hougland, Jr.
Bishop, The Episcopal Dioceses of Eastern & Western Michigan

The Rt. Rev. Bonnie A. Perry
Bishop, The Episcopal Diocese of Michigan

The Rt. Rev. Rayford Ray
Bishop, The Episcopal Diocese of Northern Michigan

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On-going resources:

From the **National Cathedral**, Sunday worship can be found on-line, starting at 11:15 am (*eastern*) by clicking here: <https://cathedral.org/worship/weekly-services/>

From the **Diocese of Northern Michigan**, Lenten Meditation and Reflections can be found on-line, on Wednesday (3/18, 3/25 & 4/1) at noon and 7pm (*eastern*) by zoom or phone.

Web link: <https://zoom.us/j/9063601901> (Meeting ID: 906 360 1901)

or, if joining by phone: dial (646) 558-8656 (Meeting ID: 906 360 1901)