
Dear Calvary,

March 13, 2020

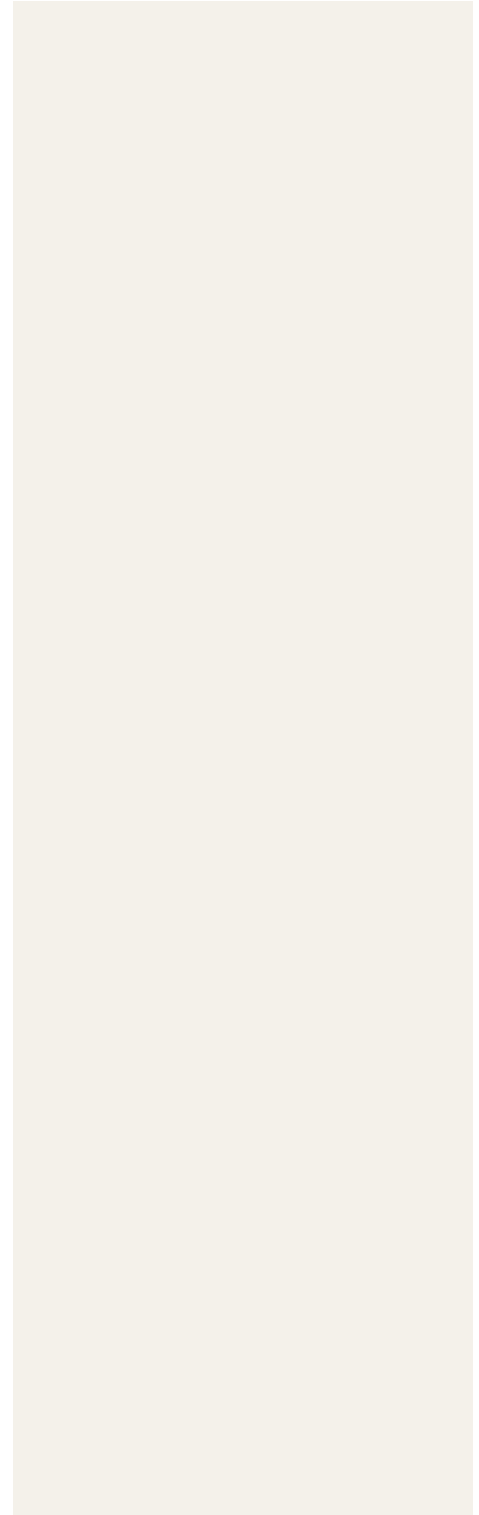
As surely as when we were children, none of us wants to find ourselves alone when we're anxious. Today I am grateful to God that I am not at all alone as we struggle to discern what a faithful response to what an international health crisis looks like in Memphis.

This morning, Bishop Phoebe Roaf and Canon Sharon Alexander hosted a videoconference for all diocesan clergy. After the meeting, several colleagues from larger Memphis parishes met as well. And for the past week, I have received daily updates from Dr. Henry Sullivant, Chief Medical Officer of the Baptist Health system (and Calvary Eucharistic Minister). Thanks be to God that we are not alone. We are a body.

Today, I am writing to let you know about changes in worship at Calvary, each of which has the blessing of Bishop Phoebe, Dr. Sullivant's full approval, and are also shared, with only slight alterations, by our brothers and sisters at Grace-St. Luke's, St. John's, Holy Communion, and St. George's.

Before I get to the particulars, I want to strongly reiterate a few basic obligations we have to one another as community members.

1. If you have flu-like symptoms, a fever, or are feeling ill, stay home. Stay connected with your friends at church and work via phone calls, emails, social media, and any way you safely can. Calvary's online directory can be accessed via [Realm](#). If you need a hard copy of the directory mailed to you, contact [Ebet Peeples](#). It is our Christian duty to keep our neighbors safe.
2. If you are older than 60 or have any compromising health condition, health officials are strongly urging you to stay away from larger groups of people, and this includes church. You will see below how Calvary is taking steps to keep you connected with your community of prayer.



3. Be vigilant about handwashing and the other personal hygiene practices we have been instructed to follow (listed below again at the bottom of this email).

WEEKLY LIFE AT CALVARY

- This Sunday we will receive Eucharist in one kind (bread) only. Theologically Christians across many traditions have agreed that doing so is full reception of the sacrament. It will be distributed by three priests (two at the altar rail, one at the standing station) who have sanitized their hands before serving, and who will drop the consecrated wafer into your open hand without touching it. Anyone who would rather not receive is still invited to come forward, cross arms across the chest, and receive a prayer of blessing.
- We will avoid physical contact with others, including during the exchange of the peace—a simple bow or verbal exchange is appropriate.
- Beginning next Sunday, March 20, Morning Prayer with a sermon will be offered at 8 and 10 a.m.
- Holy Eucharist will continue to be offered at 12:05 p.m. on Wednesdays. This will include prayers for healing and will provide people who desire it weekly access to the sacrament in a smaller context in which we can more easily control hygienic conditions.
- [Video](#), [audio](#), and [podcasts](#) of sermons will continue. Contact Director of Communications [Robyn Banks](#) if you have questions about how to access them.
- We are also working to provide video access to the entire service for those who cannot attend, hopefully in real-time, so that people who need to be at home can continue to pray with and for our parish community. [Follow our Facebook page](#) for the latest information on this.
- We will serve Community Breakfast to our hungry neighbors, but we will do so in compostable containers in the alley behind the church.

- We will refrain from serving any other food at Calvary on Sundays or Wednesdays (or any other day). Coffee and water in disposable cups will be served.
- Choir and formation for all ages, Sundays, and Wednesdays will continue, but rooms will be set up with more space between chairs for greater “social distancing.”

These are our plans as of Friday, March 13. We will continue to assess our local situation in consultation with the wise and faithful people mentioned above. Plans could change at any time, but you will be notified if and when this happens.

More than anything, during this anxious and uncertain time, I hope that you know that you are loved. Loved by God, and loved by the people of God who say their prayers with you each week. And I also pray that we continue to remember the least and the last, the vulnerable people who may find themselves even more vulnerable right now. Hourly employees who cannot go to work or business owners whose customers disappear or those without home or work or income who already live at the margins. Our decisions and responses at Calvary in the days to come will not ignore our brothers and sisters in need when those needs are greatest.

I will leave you with the collect which the lectionary assigns to be prayed for this Sunday. It’s another old prayer that sounds like it was written yesterday just for us. It is yet another reminder that we are not alone, and that the communion of saints stretches not only across our city, our country, and our world, but also across time.

Almighty God, you know that we have no power in ourselves to help ourselves: Keep us both outwardly in our bodies and inwardly in our souls, that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Faithfully yours,
Scott

Remember!

- Don't expose others if you have flu-like symptoms (i.e. stay home if you're sick!)
- Cover your cough with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash and wash your hands, or cough or sneeze into your upper arm.
- Wash your hands frequently and properly (note for Episcopalians: singing the Doxology 2X = 20 seconds)
- Avoid touching your mouth, nose or eyes.
- Avoid people who have flu-like symptoms.
- Reassess travel plans based on CDC recommendations.

