

# Rector's Update – April 17<sup>th</sup>

---

Greetings to the saints of St. Paul's,

Happy Easter! We celebrated Easter with the traditional pomp due this High Holy Day, and we sent it out live via YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCCmlrRFxbQF7CSAnFS8H9FA>) and Facebook (<https://facebook.com/stpaulsepiscopalgreenville>). People were able to worship sans shoes, and I wonder how many added Kahlua to their coffee during the sermon (you'll have to hear the sermon to get that joke). There's a good amount of talk concerning continuing the live stream after we return to normal, as we have well over a hundred views on both YouTube and Facebook each week. Additionally, our Sunday service is broadcast on the GEUS community Channel (Channel 34) on Wednesdays at 8 am and 6pm. We're getting the message of the Gospel out in Hunt County and beyond!

At the end of last month, April 15<sup>th</sup> was predicted to be the height of Coronavirus deaths in the US, with the lowest estimate being 100K, and the highest being 2.2M. To date, the US has only had 29K. We have reason to give praise to God for this, and reason to thank those who have been toiling for the safety of others! Our community joined with others throughout the world to pray for an end to this virus. I thank those who participated in the 72-hour Prayer Vigil via *For the City*. Governor Abbot has announced that we'll continue with the shutdown through April 30<sup>th</sup>, and the Hunt County Commissioners have echoed that with their Shelter-in-Place order for the same time period.

Furthermore, Bishop Sumner has ordered that we will continue with streaming only worship through (and including) May 10<sup>th</sup>. I would add that even though we expect to return to worship by the middle of May, St. Paul's is not planning on potlucks until our patron saint's day on June 28<sup>th</sup>. This is because we can worship while keeping within the 6' physical distancing, there's not a proper way to keep that same distancing during a potluck. We're looking toward cautiously ramping things back up, and are aware that we need to resume with our activities and business as soon as we can.

We are physically distancing, but not socially or spiritually distancing. Even introverts like me need to stay in touch with our friends and neighbors. Most have a good amount of unplanned time on their hands, and I encourage each of us to call and check on those who come to our hearts and minds. I remember speaking with one parishioner a number of months ago, and when I said that people had been asking about her, she responded with 'well, if they really cared, they'd have called me.' That was both a stinging and accurate response. Rather than asking someone about someone else, why not call the person you're concerned about? This is a double-edged situation, and whereas it's accurate to encourage people to call those whom they care about, it's also accurate to encourage those sitting at home feeling lonely to pick up the phone themselves. I've had this conversation repeatedly with my own mother over the years, where she didn't call me, and when I did call, she complained about me not calling. Most, if not all of us, have telephones that both call out and receive calls. Please use them!

The Daughters of the King will be dividing up our directory, and reaching out to all our members over the next week. If you do not have a directory, please call the church office and ask for one to be mailed or emailed to you.

Here's my weekly update (with some duplication)

- The church building is now locked when not in use. This is to allow for the expensive video equipment to remain in place between services, and to make it so that we do not have to complete a top-to-bottom sanitizing every time we use the church. If you are one of the parishioners who use the church for private prayer, please contact the Rector.
- Our CARE Act loan applications for the Parish and School have been turned in to Alliance Bank.
- Our Sunday services improve each week, and the number of viewers continue to increase. Our tech team (i.e. The Faunce family, Laura Funk, and Mark Walsh) are great! We'll continue to offer the service via Facebook and YouTube as live streaming (with recordings and an MP3 of the sermon posted on our website later).
- Our parish office has closed, and we are working from home through the end of April. We are checking parish voicemails remotely, responding to emails, and meetings will be done via conference calls and videoconferencing.
- If you need to get with me for a meeting, I'm available to schedule one for a phone or video call. Probably the best email is [fathernickfunk@gmail.com](mailto:fathernickfunk@gmail.com).
- Pastoral Care is being done via phone and videoconferencing. Face-to-face pastoral calls are only done in dire situations, and by the Rector only. If you have needs, please email or call – we can help!
- Zoom videoconferencing has been the major provider for videoconferencing in the Diocese, and St. Paul's is using it regularly. The St. Paul's Zoom Meeting may be found at <https://zoom.us/j/9037772020>. Our Meeting ID is: 903 777 2020, and password is: 7777777. That's the same meeting information as I use for all my meetings.
- We are offering Noonday Prayer on Wednesdays at noon via Zoom and Facebook and/or YouTube live streaming.
- Our 'Bible and Breakfast' Bible Study continues at 8:00 on Friday morning (without the breakfast) via Zoom.
- We have our Sunday Coffee Hour after the 10:30 service via a Zoom meeting.
- St. Paul's Episcopal School has reopened for the children of Essential Personnel. We have about 20 students now, compared with our normal enrollment of over 80. We have begun a rotation of teachers and staff, and are continuing to work to pay them at a rate that they can live on, and also keep the school functioning longer.

We're in a great time to live out the Gospel by reaching out to our neighbors in love, and reveal the peace that Jesus offers while many in the world panic in fear. See y'all on Sunday!

Peace, Fr. Nick