



Dear Members and Friends of Immanuel:

Someone said the other day that we are living in an age of anxiety. Part of our current anxiety, of course, is the advent of this mysterious disease, the COVID-19 coronavirus. I believe we as Christians are called to plan and prepare as we approach this threat, but also to remain calm, centered, prayerful, and faithful. So how do we prepare at Immanuel, while still hoping and praying for the best?

We will be doing a few common-sense things. Following guidance from the Diocese and various public health officials we will do the following:

--I urge us to consider refraining, until this threat is past, from shaking hands or hugging at the passing of the Peace. A fist-bump, touching elbows, a graceful bow, or even a wave are all perfectly acceptable right now.

--I ask that we refrain from intincting (dipping the consecrated bread into the chalice before receiving) during this time. Research tells us that the threat of passing germs is actually much greater when folks' fingers go into the chalice than that of any transmission from drinking from the common cup. The fortified wine itself, coupled with thorough wiping of the chalice between each use, and dipping of the purificator into alcohol all help to stop the spread of disease.

--The Episcopal Church teaches, like much of the whole Church, that one communes fully if one only receives in one kind, meaning receiving either the consecrated bread or the consecrated wine. So simply deciding not to receive the wine during this time is also perfectly acceptable. You can signal that to the chalice-bearer by crossing your arms over your chest after receiving the bread.

--Clergy and chalice bearers will sterilize hands before and after serving.

--We ask you to stay home if you are sick, for the health of everyone else.

--Hand sanitizers will be available (if we can get our hands on some) in the entrances to both chapels.

--You have (hopefully) noticed that we have been praying about this disease outbreak for several weeks now. We will continue that, with more focus, as that is part of our work to which we are called for the good of the world. As we pray we will also monitor developments and advice from the Centers for Disease Control, the National Institutes of Health, our Diocese, and others.

This gives me another occasion to say that I'm glad we're in this together.

God bless you all,

Randy

The Rev. J. Randolph Alexander, Jr.
Rector

O Lord, mercifully receive the prayers of your people who call upon you, and grant that they may know and understand what things they ought to do, and also may have grace and power faithfully to accomplish them; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen. (BCP, p. 231)