



## *Christ Episcopal Church*

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**March 19, 2020**

**Dear Christ Church Family,**

I've been asked by the Vestry to reach out and I hope this message finds you safe and well. These are difficult and uncharted times as we all adjust to the "new normal" as imposed by the coronavirus and the effect and restrictions it has placed on our lives. We are grateful that Pastor Jane has proactively risen to the challenge by providing seamless access to online services and children's messages. Thanks also to Matthew for providing music videos to compliment these services. Jane and Matthew are going above and beyond to help us fulfill our spiritual needs and our desire to maintain connection with each other even as we practice "social distancing." Our doors may be physically closed, but our hearts and arms are truly open!

As Senior Warden, my #1 concern is that all our members, our families, our children are safe and healthy and we support that by practicing safe habits, following the recommendations we read and hear about daily. This is why we are not holding weekly services in our sanctuary and limiting access to our building. None of us are sure when we will return to our usual worship schedule, but we will continue to look to the state and the town and the diocese for evolving recommendations and requirements. Bishop Douglas is leading a weekly teleconference with rectors and warden; I participated in Wednesday's call and witnessed churches sharing helpful information and supporting one another.

If there is one thing I know for sure - and many of you have heard me say this before - Christ Church was built out of love and purpose, but mainly it was built to last. I believe this is as true and relevant today as ever before. We want to stay connected to each other. Our church home holds a critical place in our hearts and it is a place we count on to help us get through challenging times in our lives.

*"Go, therefore, and make disciples ..."*

With all that is happening around us, we feel God's love and compassion. We also know and appreciate that our dedicated staff works on our behalf to help us through, including Pastor Jane's spiritual leadership and encouragement, and the joy of Matthew's music. Behind the scenes, it also includes the invaluable Maryanne, our parish administrator; Domingo, our sexton, who is truly on the front lines keeping Christ Church clean; and Judy, our bookkeeper. Our church also has those same bills and obligations that we all have at home – mortgage and utility payments, supplies, and other monthly bills. Your regular pledges and financial contributions are the foundation for us to meet these operational responsibilities...and keep our doors open, even if they are virtual! Therefore, on behalf of your Vestry, I am sending this reminder, urging you to please remember your commitment to Christ Church and please maintain your pledges or regular contributions.

At a time when many of our habits are being altered, it is important to make you aware there are many different ways you can keep up your offerings without coming to church and dropping an envelope in the collection plate. Here are four options. One or more will certainly fit every person's financial habits and preferences.

First – you can keep it “old school” and write a check, dropping it in the mail to the parish office. Pretty simple; just remember to take it to the mailbox or post office as we are not encouraging people to stop by the church.

Second – you can donate online via the church website. This can be done by using a credit card or your Paypal account. Just go to: <https://www.christchurchtrumbull.org/help-us-help-others/>, click on Donate, and follow the directions, making payments as easily as many of us do via online purchases throughout the year.

Third – many of us use our personal bank for online bill payments. Add Christ Church as a Vendor and consider making payments to the church at the same time you make regular bill payments. The bank will send us a check from you, saving you postage and a trip to the mailbox. It's a good idea to add “Christ Church offering” or “pledge” on the memo line.

Fourth – another popular source for online transactions is Venmo. If you have Venmo, you know it has a bit of a social media twist. Make Christ Church one of your “friends” and you can make payments to Christ Church by tying to a bank account, credit card, or debit card. Venmo is popular among many people who use it to reimburse friends instantly for items like meals or movie tickets. You can do the same, using the app to send pledges and contributions. And, unlike Paypal, which charges a small transaction fee, Venmo sends 100% of all payments to recipients.

*“Go, therefore, and make disciples ...”*

I'm sure all of us are used to making regular payments through one or more of these options. With no live Sunday service to trigger weekly offerings, we hope you'll understand why we felt it important to send this message to all parishioners. Please take a moment now to make an intentional adjustment – choosing how you are going to continue your support of Christ Church. Place a note on your desk, a reminder on your phone or computer, whatever you need to do to make this a new habit. Who knows, you might find you prefer a new means of payment and continue with it after we return to normal services! Old traditions don't always have to die so hard...

There are countless ways all of you show why Christ Church humbly calls itself the "little church with the big heart." In this case, we're talking about something a little different than an outreach effort or the Apple Festival, things we do so well. Today, we're talking about maintaining God's house...OUR house. It is amazing how we so often rise to the occasion and this is one more time and one more way to show your love and support for your church home. We would greatly appreciate it if you would please take the time to plan and act upon how you will continue that support.

In the words of Proverbs 18:10: *The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous run into it and are safe.* Thank you and God bless.

Todd

*"Go, therefore, and make disciples ..."*