



ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S  
EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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March 14, 2020

Dear People of St. Bartholomew's,

One may wonder how I decided to initially offer a worship service tomorrow given all that we know and don't know about COVID-19. The answer is simple.

"While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to the disciples, and said, 'Take, eat; this is my body.' Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will never again drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.' When they had sung the hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives." Matthew 26:26-30

I have long been a sacramentalist and therefore the sacraments, particularly the Bread and Wine are deeply meaningful to me. They inform my spirituality, connection with the Trinity and community. As a priest, I feel strongly about the responsibility I have to carry out this tradition with others. This is why yesterday's communication included one service on Sunday and explicitly noted this was optional. It was not born out of a desire to be contrary but one of faith and hope in a precarious season.

Since then, I have discovered this decision has upset some people and I completely understand the other perspectives. Many people are rightfully afraid. I want you to know, I tried to put forth something that was thoughtful and honoring of the current dilemma, yet making way for a small number of people to gather in a large space to carry on a sacramental tradition.

Having thoughtfully considered the concerns, I am immediately suspending all opportunities for Holy Eucharist on upcoming Sundays and Wednesdays until further notice. And the building remains closed to all groups for meetings.

The funeral for Margaret Hudgins scheduled for Saturday, March 21 at 1:00 pm will still take place at the request of the family. There will not be a reception.

Tomorrow, I encourage you to join other Episcopalians at 11:00 am to hear a message from Presiding Bishop Michael Curry. This will be hosted via the Washington National Cathedral's website <https://cathedral.org/>.

Faithfully,  
Angela+