

May 19, 2020

Dear Parishioners of Saint Barnabas,

We are all in this together. We have heard this refrain repeatedly over the last two months, echoed throughout our Island community; a call of solidarity. While it is literally true, we are also aware that everyone's experience and needs are vastly different. Whether we are starting each day wondering how to juggle an array of challenges (from remote work to caring for family members to simply navigating new rules for shopping at T&C), or amongst those whose livelihoods have been lost, or who struggle with loneliness, we are all moving through these strange times as individuals doing the best we can.

Thankfully, despite our physical separation, we know as the church we make up the Body of Christ. While we miss being together in church, this is a time to be the church – to reach out to others, to keep each other in our prayers, to help those who need help. There is no one person in charge of this, and there is no one right way to do this. The opportunities to be in relationship, to serve, and to be Christ's hands and feet, are very present, and we are called to manifest God's love through our actions.

**As with all things in the age of COVID 19, the Vestry is learning and adapting as we go. Here is what we know and do not know:**

- We know that bills continue to come in and that bills continue to be paid, even for unexpected expenses, such as recent repairs to the church for water damage.
- We do not know when churches will open again for worship services.
- We know that when church opens it will not be the same as it was before.
- We know that many are continuing to fulfill their annual pledge to the best of their ability; we also know that there have been gifts beyond pledges to support St. Barnabas and to provide funds to the Rector's Discretionary Fund, for which we are profoundly grateful. Beautifully, those who can are giving, and those who need are receiving.
- We do not know how you're doing and we'd like to change that.

**One of the biggest needs we as the vestry have is communication from you.** We are not able to sit next to you in the pew or grab a few words alone at coffee hour. Communication has always been important but at this unprecedented time it's absolutely vital. So please let us know how you are doing. And how are we doing? What is missing from your experience of St. Barnabas? This is not a promise to fix anything, but an invitation to engage with you. Your vestry is here to listen. Please contact us.

Sincerely,

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