

April 7, 2020

Dear Emmanuel Friends:

Greetings! I hope you are staying safe and healthy and coping with the many changes that we are facing these days. I trust you are keeping faith that God loves you, cares about you, and has designs on your life.

I love these verses from the Old Testament book of Jeremiah: “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.” – Jeremiah 27:11-13

That is an important message for us. One of my hopes for Emmanuel people is that we might find opportunities to grow spiritually during this time of physical separation. How can we use this time to grow our faith, to strengthen our relationship with God? The Lord says we should seek him with all our heart.

As I write this we are in the middle of Holy Week, a blessed time during which we remember Jesus Christ’s journey to the cross, his death, and resurrection. Usually we are preparing for a series of services – Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Resurrection Day or Easter Sunday. What will that look like for you this year? How will you commemorate what our savior Jesus Christ did for us? Even though we are not meeting in person at Emmanuel this year, Christ’s journey is every bit as real, his sacrifice as meaningful as ever.

Will you learn from Jesus how to be a servant on Maundy Thursday? Will you walk with our Lord as he goes to the cross on Good Friday? Will your heart leap for joy on Easter Sunday?

Remember that God says “you will seek me and find me” when you do so with all your heart. God is receptive to us. He wants a relationship with us. We have the Bible that speaks truth to our soul. We have the Book of Common Prayer that offers a rich variety of services and devotions that we can use at home by ourselves, with family members, or even with a friend over the phone. I will continue to provide ideas for streaming services. The Diocese of Central New York offers several. The point is, seek him – through prayer, devotions, Bible reading, virtual services, and through each other.

Another hope I have for our parish is that we will stay connected. We have a Facebook Group Page, Emmanuel Church Family. We have a Website, emmanueladams.org. Gretchen Martelle continues to circulate messages to the parish by email. And we have our telephones. Please use these devices to connect with others, particularly folks who are alone.

We also need to seek opportunities to serve our community. Ben and Cathy Peyton and Shirley McFadden have started a project to aid the Rohde Center in meeting food needs of families in our area. The Rohde can use a \$1 donation to buy \$10 worth of food for a hungry family. To donate, write a check to the Rohde Center and send to Emmanuel Episcopal Church, PO Box 29, Adams. Mark the envelope Loaves and Fishes. Gretchen will see that your check is recorded and sent to the Rohde. Pass the word to other individuals who might join this effort.

The question has arisen: What do we do with our pledges? I would ask that you try to fulfill your pledge this year even though we are not meeting for services and other events. No matter what happens, we all need to support our parish financially to stay vital and solvent. Some folks are setting aside their tithe in their envelopes each week. If you wish to mail your pledge you can send it to the PO Box. Please designate “pledge” on the envelope.

A special thanks to Father Jerry Wichelns for preparing messages and providing comfort and encouragement to people at this time. He always goes the extra mile for us.

In the coming weeks we will learn more about how to answer God's call in this time of crisis. My desire is that you will all stay healthy and happy, that we will stay in close touch, that we will figure out ways to grow our faith, and that we will serve our community.

May God bless you, keep you, and make his face to shine upon you. May you know the peace that passes all understanding.

Sincerely in Christ,

John McFadden