



## A Pastoral Update from Darren+

*God of grace and giver of life look with mercy on all who find themselves in anxiety, distress, isolation, weakness or infirmed. Help us to assist them and our community with hope, help when needed and dignity and peace whether their strength diminishes or in their recovery; increase their faith and assurance of your love. All this we ask in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. Amen.*

Dear Friends,

In these challenging days, while we are all learning more and preparing for the days ahead, the uncertainty and anxiety around can leave one overwhelmed. Since last week and my first Pastoral Message to the parish, we have learned more and are taking further steps to keep you and our community as healthy and safe as possible. This health crisis of COVID-19 (Coronavirus) is ever evolving. The proactive steps that our Governor, Mike DeWine has taken represent bold action to address the spread of COVID-19. These changes to our daily routines impact each of us and our community in some way.

While we have further enhanced our own health and safety protocols, we are also preparing to best meet the directives our Governor set forth regarding schools and public gatherings. We follow the leadership that our Presiding Bishop has expressed to numerous dioceses in our joint effort to meet the challenges of this crisis in a way that is also exemplary of our values as a Christian community and part of the larger Body of Christ.

Complementing the efforts already underway by our local school districts, we are directing that our parish and Day School suspend their normal activities and programs **from Monday, March 16<sup>th</sup> through at least Monday, March 30<sup>th</sup>.**

In this time, while several smaller groups may still meet, **we will not have public worship on either Sunday, March 22 or March 29.** The church will be open during the week for private prayer and our weekday Evening Prayer service will continue on Tuesday evenings at 6:15 p.m. We will be communicating more to our parish community in a variety of ways, to better stay connected in prayer for devotionals as well as our Lenten Series, *St. Thomas 101*. We will continue to monitor information from that comes from the CDC and Ohio Department of Health daily and follow their guidelines as well as what is being directed to our public schools, and continue communicating to you through our web page, email messages and Facebook page.

Preserving and even strengthening our sense of community is a top priority for us in these days. The last thing we want is for anyone to feel cut-off from our faith community, so many touch-points are needed. Now is the time to make sure we have your best contact information to reach you, as well as to make sure that you have not “opted-out” of general information. Even more, I would ask that you reach-out to those who are already in your own “network,” whether by phone or email. We have already been reaching-out on our end here to our seniors and those we know with health issues to check-in and offer pastoral support. You can help us affirm this message as well by letting us know if someone is in need of a visit.

Once again, let me commend that I believe community is an essential aspect of who we are. In these weeks of this virus season, we all wish to be extra safe, so thank you for your patience and understanding as we all work a little harder. May God continue to bless you and the ministry we share in Christ!

*Darren Elin+*

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE REV. DARREN R.S. ELIN  
RECTOR OF ST. THOMAS EPISCOPAL CHURCH

100 MIAMI AVENUE • TERRACE PARK, OHIO 45174 • EMAIL: DARREN@STTHOMASEPISCOPAL.ORG  
PARISH OFFICE: 513.831.2052 • FAX: 513.831.4561 • WWW.STTHOMASEPISCOPAL.ORG

## **Additional Resources:**

Governor DeWine Announces School Closures:

<https://governor.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/governor/media/news-and-media/announces-school-closures>

Governor DeWine Bans Mass Gatherings of 100 or More:

<https://governor.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/governor/media/news-and-media/bans-mass-gatherings-of-100-or-more>

General Information on COVID-9 (Coronavirus) from the CDC:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

Information on COVID-19 from the World Health Organization (WHO):

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

Resource for parents on talking with your children about Coronavirus from Spark & Stitch Institute:

<https://sparkandstitchinstitute.com/talking-to-children-about-coronavirus/>

“Prepare Yourself, Your Family, and Your Community” - CDC:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/protect/prepare.html>

Printable Fact Sheets:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/2019-ncov-factsheet.pdf>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/stop-the-spread-of-germs.pdf>

Printable version of the Ohio Department of Health Order:

[https://content.govdelivery.com/attachments/OHOD/2020/03/12/file\\_attachments/1399681/ODH%20Order%20to%20Limit%20and%20Prohibit%20Mass%20Gatherings,%203.12.20.pdf](https://content.govdelivery.com/attachments/OHOD/2020/03/12/file_attachments/1399681/ODH%20Order%20to%20Limit%20and%20Prohibit%20Mass%20Gatherings,%203.12.20.pdf)