



## **Bishop's Directive and Rector's Reflection During Coronavirus Period of Social Distancing March 18, 2020**

*From The Rev. Meredith T. Heffner  
St. James' Episcopal Church, Potomac, Maryland*

### **Bishop's Directive**

Bishop Mariann has extended her directive that all public services and other church gatherings be suspended until May 16, in keeping with the most recent recommendations from the CDC. She has called a meeting of the clergy of our region this afternoon, so that we might prepare for what lies ahead, most notably Holy Week and Easter.

Needless to say, this makes me very sad, but I believe it is the right thing to do. I will share with you whatever I learn, and your Vestry and I will soon be planning for the weeks ahead. I miss you, and I miss sharing God's love with you *in person*, and I continue to trust that God will lead us through.

In the meantime, keep us in prayer. I hope today's reflection will give you some hope.

*Rev. Meredith*

### **Rector's Reflection**

A friend invited me to take a look at Maria Shriver's digital page called, "Maria Shriver's Sunday Paper." I must admit, I wasn't expecting much. But this friend is thoughtful and wise—and funny—so I didn't think it would hurt to take a look. Truth be told, I was pretty impressed.

This week, as you would expect, Maria shared her thoughts about the need to change our behavior in order to shelter the most vulnerable from the Covid-19 virus.

Just a week ago life was the same as it always was. Yet in just a few days, things have dramatically changed. Shelves have been cleared at grocery stores. Schools and businesses are closed. Families are learning how to work and study under one roof. Church has gone virtual. We have had to change our behavior in "radical ways."

Maria asks an interesting question. She writes, "what if the radical change that's being called for is also an opportunity for us to move closer together? What if it's the chance for us to cut the distance that already exists between us and begin to see ourselves—all of us—as humans living through the same situation and having the same shared experience? Perhaps this is a moment to radically come together and practice radical compassion, radical empathy, and radical caring for our fellow human beings."

Shriver ends this paragraph by saying, "Just thinking about it as a possibility fills me with hope."

*Continued on next page*

I like this idea that the experiences we are having today offer us the opportunity to respond in love, giving us hope—not just hope that things will “return to normal”—but hope that when this is over, things will be even better.

In Romans, Paul says, “Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with the Lord’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality.”

I think this sums things up. Things are not easy, they may become more difficult, but we trust that with God’s help, we will come through. And maybe, coming together in compassion, the days to come will be better than before.

Take care of yourselves. Reach out to one another. Be safe and wash your hands.

Much love and many blessings,

*Rev. Meredith*

+ + +

### **St. Patty’s Day Quiz!**

Here are the complete Irish sayings. (Thank you morningbrew.com)

How many did you know?!

1. The older the fiddle the sweeter the tune.
2. May your home always be too small to hold all of your friends.
3. You’ll never plow a field by turning it over in your mind.
4. May misfortune follow you the rest of your life, and never catch up.
5. If you’re enough lucky to be Irish, you’re lucky enough.

### **Survey question of the week!**

I shared on Monday the song “Psalm 139” by Sons of Korah, but my favorite non-churchy song is Tom Cochrane’s version of “Life is a Highway.” (Really!)

What is your favorite song? What are you listening to these days? What songs lift your spirit? Want to join me in putting together a St. James’ play list? Email me your suggestions at [rector@stjamespotomac.org](mailto:rector@stjamespotomac.org) and let’s see what we can do! “Churchy” and “non-churchy” songs are welcome.

+ + +