



**St Thomas'**  
EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
*Rochester, New York*

March 17, 2020

The Very Reverend  
Leslie Burkardt,  
*Rector*

Dear St. Thomas' Beloved,

God's peace to you in these uncertain and anxious times. It with much prayer and care that I write to inform you of how we as a church are moving forward with due diligence. The following will be effective immediately and until further notice:

- All worship will be held virtually, which means there will be NO public services. Services will be shared via email, Facebook and posted on the website.
- All meetings, gathering, rentals, classes, ministry groups and social group meetings are canceled. As we move forward, some groups will use STC to communicate or Zoom to hold meetings.
- The Church Office will be closed by Thursday, March 19 at noon. Bills will be paid once a week; deposits will be made as necessary and payroll will be processed as usual. Pastoral emergencies should call the parish office 585-442-3544 (ext. 103) and leave a message for the Rector; the staff will be checking their email and phone messages daily.
- Pastoral Care: Lay Pastoral Visitors will connect with the parish members assigned to them by phone, email or note. Clergy pastoral care will be done by the phone or email, apart from extreme situations.

The Reverend  
Andrea Stridiron,  
*Deacon*

Dr. Robert Ferris,  
*Assistant to the  
Rector*

Our goal should be physical distancing, not social distancing, as we need to keep connected. I encourage you to email your prayer requests so that we can know how to pray for one another. Staying connected to each other is something that everyone can do and should do. If someone comes to mind, perhaps that is the Holy Spirit encouraging you to give that person a call.

In the spirit of keeping connected, St. Thomas' will make the following available:

1. Morning Prayer will be posted by 8:00 a.m. on Sunday morning via email, shared on Facebook and on our website: [stthomasrochester.org](http://stthomasrochester.org).
2. You are invited to participate in "Conversations over Coffee" (a fellowship opportunity) beginning this Sunday, March 22 from 10:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m., which will be done through Zoom. You can use a computer/tablet, landline or mobile phone to participate. Please follow the directions below.  
Computer/tablet: <http://zoom.us/j/608346582> Meeting Id: 608-346-582  
One tap mobile: 1-646-558-8656 Meeting Id: 608-346-582#  
Landline: 1-646-558-8656 Meeting Id: 608-346-582#
3. Facebook will be used to share information, prayer practices and videos.

I understand it is hard to feel disconnected from our normal routine, friends, communities and practices. None of these changes are easy for anyone. We will certainly miss seeing each other; I will miss being with you. We are only a phone call away. Please be patient as we work to develop these new tools. Let's hold each other in our daily prayers and remember that love is not canceled, prayers are not canceled, worship, as a way of life is not canceled, and hope is not canceled. Let us be mindful to pay attention to the little moments of grace and acts of kindness we can both extend and receive.

*Blessing: The world is too dangerous and too beautiful for anything but love. May your heart be so opened, so set on fire, that your love, your love changes everything. In the name of loving, liberating, life-giving God. Amen.*

With love,  
Amma Leslie+

Resources:

For families: Forward Movement: <https://www.dofaithathome.org/>

Buildfaith.org – a good article to help you talk about the COVID-19 with Children, “Coronavirus, Anxiety, Children and the Church”

[www.littlewaychapel.com](http://www.littlewaychapel.com)

Daily office online resources:

The Daily Office from Mission of St. Claire

[BCPonline.org](http://BCPonline.org)

Health related resources:

Episcopal Relief and Development: <https://www.episcopalrelief.org/>

Centers for Disease Control: [cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov)

Monroe County Department of Health: [monroecounty.gov/health-coronavirus](http://monroecounty.gov/health-coronavirus)