



The Episcopal Diocese of Lexington

May 1, 2020

A Pastoral Letter from Bishop Mark

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Last night, we gathered online as clergy, senior wardens, Executive Council and Standing Committee members, staff, officers of our church, and youth representatives to discuss a Way Forward for our Diocese in Covidtime. It was heartening to see your faces on screen, hear your comments, and witness your passion for our Church. In summary, this is what we agreed last evening:

1. We accepted the proposed phased approach. Even though it does not give us a date certain, we go forward together in hope with a clear vision.
2. Now is not yet the time to return to in-person worship. The threat remains for those we love: our friends, our families and our neighbors. We accept patiently enduring this time of fasting from in-person worship and will focus on the many creative ways we have discovered to express our faith. For the moment, this is our primary spiritual work.
3. We agreed to a collegial approach, which recognizes the uniqueness of each faith community and the responsibility of clergy-in-charge, and, at the same time, we recommit ourselves to our common life as one Church. We will not act independently.
4. Mission House will provide guidelines to facilitate each faith community's action planning and the collegial review process. We will only act after mutual agreement.

In making these decisions, I believe we are being faithful to God's call on us to be a distinctive community. We will not make the false choice of either opening our buildings or keeping our people safe. Our trust is in the name of the Lord and our priority is the flourishing of all God's people; we believe that we can be the Church, even in Covidtime.

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

+Mark

Per The Episcopal Church Canon III.12.3(b) Bishop Mark asks that all Clergy and Wardens in Charge share this Pastoral Letter with their faith communities.