

— *ST. MARK'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH* —

400 SOUTH MAIN STREET
NEWARK, NEW YORK 14513
315-331-3610

March 12, 2020

Dear Sisters and Brothers of St. Mark's:

I am so blessed to be part of such an energetic and lively faith community. I tell friends and family daily how much each of you mean to my spiritual life. I know that since last summer we have become a much more active parish which is exciting in itself; however, as many of you are aware, there is much concern of the current health climate. As your rector, I am always concerned about each and every parishioner's health, whether it be physical, mental, or spiritual. With that in mind and in light of the recent reports concerning COVID-19, we have been directed by the Bishop's office of the following:

1. Suspension of the use of the common cup.
2. Suspension of worship beginning Monday, March 16th.
3. Encouraging the implementation of Morning Prayer at your own home for the remaining Sunday services in Lent.

In response to that directive, I am implementing the following temporary changes in our life together at St. Mark's.

1. Cancelling Wednesday and Sunday Services including Sunday School beginning Monday, March 16th until further notice.
2. Postponing the Monday Lenten Study Group
3. Postponing Confirmation Class and the Bishop's Visit
4. Cancelling the Vestry Meeting for March

We will be gathering for worship this Sunday, March 15 but will be conscious of the health concerns by not physically passing the peace, nor will we pass a shared common cup. There will be no coffee hour following worship.

While we may not be able to gather together for worship and meetings following this Sunday, I will continue to keep you in prayer and be available for pastoral care, hospital visits, and one on one meetings.

office@stmarknewark.org

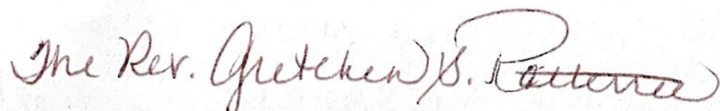
www.stmarknewark.org

I will be mailing out a weekly update that will include the current prayer requests along with the lectionary readings, and my sermon for the week to be used with the Morning Prayer service that will be sent to you next week.

I look forward to reinstating our worship and active parish life as soon as the bishop lifts the directive. He is hoping and praying that we will be back by Easter. Please feel free to contact me either through the office or by calling the rectory at (315) 830-0026.

As we continue to walk in the wilderness of Lent, I hope that each of us find God's pillar of light to lead us through safely.

Many Blessings to each of you,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "The Rev. Gretchen S. Ratterree". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name.

The Rev. Gretchen S. Ratterree,
Rector