

March 18, 2020

This past Sunday was unlike any we have experienced in our life as a parish. Along with churches across the country, and with the guidance of our bishop, we made a difficult decision. For the sake of the Gospel imperative to care for the most vulnerable among us, we made the decision to forego public worship. We stayed home from church, in order to be the church.

Despite this difficult decision, we still managed to come together for worship on Sunday morning, as our staff quickly curated and led an online Morning Prayer service. As of this writing, our service has been viewed more than 800 times.

The Good Shepherd staff is hard at work to ensure that our life of worship and formation continues through this disruption, and that we continue to offer pastoral care to our community. Here are just some of the opportunities in the works:

- We continue to provide Christian education to the children of our parish. Dozens of families gathered for an online Godly Play lesson this past Sunday and will do so again this coming Sunday.
- Our cherished weekday morning Lenten services have continued without disruption, as our clergy are now leading online Morning Prayer at 7am each weekday morning.
- Our Mom's Bible study gathered online this week, and online options are being explored for a host of other weekly formation groups (stay tuned for updates).
- The Good Shepherd youth will meet online for Episcopal Youth Community (EYC) next Wednesday March 25 and will soon begin cultivating online community with Episcopal youth groups citywide, at a time when many of their other outlets for meeting with friends have been disrupted.
- This coming Sunday, we'll again offer a streaming worship service at 10:30am that will feature music from our choral scholars.

For information on these and other offerings, visit the COVID-19 update section of our website ([gsaustin.org/coronavirus](https://gsaustin.org/coronavirus)), which is where we'll continue to keep you informed in the days ahead. We also suggest following Good Shepherd on Facebook ([facebook.com/GoodShepherdATX](https://facebook.com/GoodShepherdATX)) and Instagram ([instagram.com/goodshepherdadustin](https://instagram.com/goodshepherdadustin)), not only to stay informed, but to foster community during this time of social distancing.

If you were unable to attend our online worship this past Sunday, I commend to you the sermon preached by Stanford Adams. You can see it on vimeo ([vimeo.com/398131561](https://vimeo.com/398131561)). In it, he reminds us that our decision to act for the common good, while coming at a cost to us, also brings us closer to each other and to God.

I encourage you to take advantage of these opportunities to stay connected to your Good Shepherd family during this season of uncertainty and change. Let's continue to be the church, because the world needs our prayers, and we need each other.

Peace,



Milo Burdette,  
Senior Warden