

Lent is traditionally a time for the practice of disciplines that allow for the testing of our faith. O my, this Lenten season has proven to be a great test for people of all faiths, and those without a faith tradition, around the globe. As Christians, we are called to respond to the great test of this Covid-19 pandemic with practices that support us through all of life—faith, prayer, empathy, patience, generosity and kindness. When our trust in God is strong, we can act during times of crisis with calm resolve to protect ourselves and others as best we can, but also to leave things that are out of our control in the care of God, who we know loves us, and the world. Let us pray for, and practice, strong faith during the days ahead.

In order to protect ourselves and others during this time, changes have been made to the Westminster schedule of activities for the next eight weeks in accordance with recent guidance from the CDC and our state officials. We will hold one worship service at 11am on Sundays that will be live-streamed and accessible on your smartphone or computer. At the end of the week, we will send out an email blast to inform you of how to connect with that service. At this point, I am open to allowing those who are in good health and pledge to adhere to hygiene and self-distancing guidelines to attend the service, as long as we have less than 50 people present. This is not recommended for those 65 years of age or older. There will be no Sunday school or childcare.

The remainder of the COW classes for Lent have been cancelled, as well as the St. Patrick's Day Dinner and the Talent Show and lunch. It is recommended that ministry teams and other small groups meet remotely through conference calls or other technology.

With those suffering ill health or are over 65 years of age self-quarantining, it is important that we all keep in contact with one another and support one another through this crisis. If you need someone to go to the grocery store or pick up a prescription for you, please call your parish deacon or the church office.

Finally, please remember that the financial needs of the church continue through this crisis. Please be faithful to your 2020 estimate of giving, as you are able, by sending your contributions to the church by mail. This might also be a great time to try our online giving option that is on our website at [westminsac.org](http://westminsac.org).

These are indeed uncertain times, a true wilderness experience of great testing. This virus is not by any means a test sent by God, yet it is still one that we must respond to out of the resources of our faith. And maybe something good can come out of this terrible pandemic. Maybe as a nation and a global community we can be drawn closer to one another in caring, empathy and mutual support. Let us pray that it is so.

Stay well and be at peace.

*Wes*