

*Note: A text of the opening comments that Bishop Goff offered on webinars with the clergy this week and a transcript of questions and answers are posted **here**.*

Dear Friends in Christ,

During Holy Week and Easter, it is our Christian responsibility and honor to walk with Jesus along the way of the cross. We follow his path from suffering, through death and right through to life on the other side. This year we in the Diocese of Virginia will join with people of faith around the world on a different kind of Holy Week and Easter journey.

As the world community works together to slow the spread of COVID-19, we will not gather publicly for worship or other activities during the most holy time of the year. Let there be no doubt that this will stretch us, and let there be no doubt that we will worship God, we will commemorate the last week of our Lord's earthly life, we will celebrate the wonder and glory of the resurrection. We will do it all in ways that will honor God, that will honor the health of the most vulnerable among us, and that will honor the restrictions placed upon us by our civic leaders. We are the Church, and we will be the Church during Holy Week, on Easter Day, and for as long as God calls us.

We are gathering resources to support you in your holy walk in this particular season. They are posted on the **COVID-19 Resource page** on the diocesan website.

Together, we will worship and do the work of evangelism that is so much a part of our Holy Week and Easter journey. Together, we will tell the story of our faith in compelling ways. Together, we will address financial issues in a season when congregations depend on offerings to support God's mission.

As we move toward a new kind of Holy Week and Easter, do not be afraid. God is bigger than our fears, bigger than our sense of loss. God is present and at work in this pandemic, showing us renewed ways to be community. The truth of this time remains eternal:

Christ has died.
Christ is risen.
Christ will come again.

God bless you. God bless us all as we walk this road in hope, in truth, and in growing faith – together.

Faithfully yours,

The Rt. Rev. Susan E. Goff
Bishop Suffragan and Ecclesiastical Authority

The Rt. Rev. Jennifer Brooke-Davidson Assistant Bishop

Let us pray,

Almighty God, whose most dear son went not up to joy but first he suffered pain, and entered not into glory before he was crucified: Mercifully grant that we, walking in the way of the cross, may find it none other than the way of life and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen