

April 4, 2020

Dear friends in Christ,

These are strange times with a pandemic that locks us away in our homes for the care and safety of the most vulnerable in our communities. Most of us live with the anxiety or heart-breaking reality that our lives are being fundamentally changed in all of this. Loved ones may get sick; some will die. Family and friends must be physically distant. Employment and financial stability are at risk. We are all experiencing layers of grief and worry that we simply didn't have a month ago.

And yet, this remains: **God's unwavering love for the sake of the world; the salvation of Jesus Christ who makes all things new, and the movement of the Holy Spirit that binds us together.**

To accompany one another through Holy Week is a profound gift and proclamation of hope and life in these times of grief and uncertainty. And yet, our Holy Week is not the same because we can not gather together in person for our usual liturgies and rituals around this good news. However, our staff has been hard at work finding ways for us to accompany one another during this Holy Week. We will gather, just not face-to-face.

Together, we *will* remind one another of the gift of grace. Together, we *will* witness and enter into the passion of our Lord, Jesus Christ as he enters our human suffering. Together, we *will* proclaim the surprising and world-changing reality that Christ is risen from the dead, triumphant over all our fears with the victory over death and the grace. Christ lives above, below and beyond Covid19! We hold to the reality that Jesus breaks out of graves and moves through locked doors to proclaim grace and hope. God is with us! Salvation is for us no matter what is happening in our world. Thanks be to God!

Gather with us for the following Holy Week observances at [www.facebook.com/TrinityPerkasie](https://www.facebook.com/TrinityPerkasie). All Facebook "LIVE" worship services continue appear as videos on the site afterwards. If your internet connection or our Facebook livestream offerings become "glitchy" during the live feed, the saved videos are intact without those glitches. You can still interact and comment after the live event. If you do not want to join facebook, follow the link on our website ([www.trinityperkasie.org](http://www.trinityperkasie.org)) and you can still watch the live stream without the ability to comment.

If you know of someone who would like to participate in our worship services who is not connected to the internet or facebook, they are invited to call in to listen to the services on our new no-pin conference line. Simply call 215-258-9701 at the time of worship and listen. Share the news!

All worship resources will be emailed from [trinityperkasie@verizon.net](mailto:trinityperkasie@verizon.net) during the week.

Palm/Passion Sunday Worship on April 5 at 9:30 a.m.

- At 5:15 a.m., there will be a post to our Facebook page inviting you to share a picture of your family with a palm frond (real or crafted) or branch. Share your picture in the comments so we can see one another gathered for our virtual palm parade!

- During the worship service, enjoy a video created by 12 members of our congregation who read a portion of the passion from the Gospel of Matthew.

Wednesday Holden Evening Prayer on April 8 at 7:00 p.m.

- At 7:00 p.m., a video recording of last week's Holden Evening Prayer will be posted to Facebook. Please interact and comment as if it were live. The participant guide has been emailed for the past 2 weeks attached to the Tuesday email.

Maundy Thursday Worship on April 9 at 7:00 p.m.

- A relaxed Maundy Thursday observance will be on Facebook Live at 7:00 p.m. Join us as we remember Jesus' final commandment to his disciples: love one another as I have loved you.

Virtual Prayer Vigil, Thursday, April 9 at 9:00 p.m. until Friday, April 10 at 9:00 a.m.

- Attached to the Tuesday, April 7 email from church, you will receive prayer vigil resources and a link to sign up for an hour of our virtual prayer vigil. At the appointed hour, comment on the facebook prayer vigil post and receive the prayer requests of others. You are also invited to use the prayer resources at any time for reflection and devotion during Holy Week.

Good Friday Tenebrae Worship on April 10 at 7:00 p.m.

- The Tenebrae service of darkness on Facebook Live includes the reading of the passion from the Gospel of John and meditative hymns and music.

The Resurrection of our Lord - Easter Holy Communion, Sunday, April 12 at 9:30 a.m.

- At 5:15 a.m., we will post on Facebook inviting the community to share a picture of yourselves in your Easter "best" (whatever that looks like this year!) We want to see your faces and remind one another of our community in Christ who will gather at 9:30 for worship. Post all day. Let's see how many people we can "see" on Easter!
- At 9:30 a.m. we will gather for Holy Communion on Facebook Live. While we can not gather in person for worship in Word and Sacrament, we are gathered together as a community through our technology. Our technological gatherings are a shadow of our in-person life-giving gatherings and yet Christ still meets us in Word and physical elements like bread, wine and water beyond our current social and physical limitations. In this time, we trust that Christ is truly present with us, as promised, when we gather to remember his sacrifice and gift of grace. We all eagerly await the time when we can safely gather again in-person as the body of Christ to share in the sacrament of Holy Communion. However, for this season of pandemic and in the midst of the celebration of the Resurrection of Our Lord, we reach toward a practice that is not ideal but is still full of the mystery and presence of the risen Christ.

As the called and ordained pastor in the community of Trinity, I will lead us through the meal as we do every Sunday morning when we gather at Trinity. In so doing, I will encourage someone in your household to speak the words of proclamation with me so that it is embodied and spoken in your home. We are invited to eat and drink bread and wine/grape juice resting in the promise and

mystery of Christ who shows up because he says he will—even through technology.

In preparation for this meal, you are invited to gather bread and wine/grape juice at your home. Come as close as you can to these elements (do not risk going to the store just for this!) If you only have one element, rest assured that Christ is fully present in that one element. If you have questions or concerns, please contact me at [pastorjphelps@gmail.com](mailto:pastorjphelps@gmail.com) or 215-859-3779.

During Holy Week, our regular schedule of 11:30 a.m. Facebook Live offerings continue:

- Monday: Live Chat with Pastor Jenn with morning prayer, scripture, updates and responding to your questions.
- Tuesday: Children's Chat with Pastor Jenn with songs, stories and activities.
- Wednesday: Bible Chat with Pastor Jenn including morning prayer and a quick review of upcoming scripture. Bible study with Pastor John Bernsten to follow at noon via Zoom.
- Thursday: Music Chat with Drew including morning prayer and scripture.
- Friday: Live "Fun" Friday chat will be a time of scripture, prayer and meditation for Good Friday.

I invite your prayers this week and always for our congregation as we continue on this journey together as the body of Christ. I give thanks for a dedicated and innovating staff: Deacon Deb, Drew, Dave, Melissa and Rosi, the director of our Child Care Center. I give thanks for you, as the people of God, for your presence together in this time. It is life-giving to see the ways our leaders and members have stepped up to encourage one another, reach out and serve in God's name in this time. Above all, I give thanks to God who is guiding us to new life and means of ministry!

And I rest in the promises of God when I get anxious and worried: God is with us. Christ is our salvation in this time and forever. The Spirit is moving to gather us together and equip us for ongoing ministry to share the Good News. Thanks be to God!

In Christ,

*Pastor Jenn*

The Rev. Dr. Jennifer L. Phelps  
Pastor