

Dear Friends,

Loving and caring for people is what St. John's has been doing here in Georgetown for almost 225 years. Our mission, rooted in faith, demands that we prioritize the health and well being of our community over anything else. So with a heavy heart, but also with certainty that this is the right decision, we are cancelling the Georgetown House Tour and Patrons' Party, as well as the remaining concerts in the Georgetown Concert Series this year. We are hopeful that by next year the risks of gathering in person will be substantially reduced, making the House Tour, Patrons' Party, and concerts both safe and feasible. And if so, we will rejoice and celebrate with expanded offerings and a joyful celebration of the House Tour's 90th year. But given the uncertainties about a vaccine, testing, and transmission, we are also considering creative options for next year's fund-raising events if gathering in person is still too risky.

As you know, during the COVID crisis, our buildings may have been closed, but we have still been church! Our collaboration with Christ Church, Georgetown on our Virtual Morning and Evening Prayer services are viewed by hundreds of people each day, and almost 200 people from both churches have done readings or prayers which have also been enhanced with our organ for hymns and music by soloists from the choir on Sundays. Seeing each other in our homes reading these ancient words has kept us deeply connected to each other and to the roots of our faith. We also offer a weekly Holy Eucharist and Centering Prayer online every Tuesday, as well as a virtual Compline on Wednesdays. Our Saturday Supper and Grate Patrol meals have become "Grab-and-Go" dinners, where our vulnerable neighbors can also pick up masks and hand sanitizer to help protect them during the pandemic. Parishioners have been checking in on each other to see if anyone needs groceries or other support. And we have redirected financial resources to address the COVID crisis with grants to Chef Jose Andres' World Central Kitchen, the Salvation Army's Grate Patrol, and the Georgetown Business Improvement District's fund for employees of local businesses who have lost their incomes because of the virus.

As you may imagine, the financial impact on St. John's of not holding the House Tour or in-person services has been substantial. With the cancelled Fall concerts, we will have no more income this year from the Concert Series.

Thankfully, we were able to obtain a loan/grant as part of the federal government's COVID relief program to offset some of that lost income. Our online giving has increased, and our vestry has amended the budget to reflect this significant decrease in income. These difficult times have made clear that our ministry of connection – to each other and to the values of love, healing, and care for the vulnerable – is absolutely vital to the well being of our community. Now more than ever, we need your help to continue this work.

Would you be willing to make a donation to St. John's so that we can continue our mission of helping those in need and serving the Georgetown community?

Please know that the people of St. John's continue to pray for you and all who are affected by this crisis.

God bless you and those you love,

The Rev. Gini Gerbasi  
Rector