



# CHRIST CHURCH

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*The Rev. Matthew Hoxsie Mead, Rector*

May 19, 2020

## THE RECTOR'S CHRONICLE

Dear Friends in Christ,

Over the last two months many things that we take for granted as staples of regular life have been changed, closed, postponed, or cancelled. Included in this are the regular rhythms and expectations of daily homelife, health, and employment, and also major life events such as birthdays, anniversaries, weddings, funerals, graduations, moving up ceremonies, baptisms, and confirmations. Some of these major life events are often being celebrated in new ways, some have been cancelled or postponed indefinitely. I want to take this moment to recognize how challenging this is for many of our members and for our local communities, and to ask your prayers for those who are dealing with these changes, closures, postponements, and cancellations.

Our weekly online worship includes birthdays for the past week and coming week (this is to give anyone who was "missed" the opportunity to send in info so we can update our birthday list). One of my sons – we ordered a cake from *Flowerbake by Angela*, located in Pelham, which was amazing! – three of my sons' cousins, and one of their aunt's celebrated birthdays in the last few weeks. They are not alone; many birthdays have been celebrated online, in drive-by fashion or in new ways. Please keep all who have or will soon celebrate birthday in your prayers, especially those who have or will turn ages of cultural or personal significance.

*O God, our times are in your hand: Look with favor, we pray, on your servants who begin another year. Grant that they may grow in wisdom and grace, and strengthen their trust in your goodness all the days of their lives; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

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We were supposed to have a Baptism on the Second Sunday of Easter which has been postponed to a date to be determined. Please keep all families with newborn and young children in your prayers as they await the celebration of Baptism. Please also keep all who have found Christ but have not yet been able to join a Christian community in your prayers.

*Almighty God, by our baptism into the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ, you turn us from the old life of sin: Grant that we, being reborn to new life in him, may live in righteousness and holiness all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.*

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This Sunday, May 24, was to be Confirmation Sunday with Bishop Dietsche. Please keep Daniel, Bates, Lane, Lucy, Nate, Liam, and Luke in your prayers. One of the highlights of my ministry as your Rector is working each year with the Confirmation Class. I'm sorry that we will not get to celebrate Confirmation this Sunday, but I look forward to the future when Confirmation will be one of our great coming back together celebrations. Please keep all young people and adults who await making their own public affirmation of faith and receiving the laying on hands by the Bishop. And please also keep people of other faiths and traditions who await making their own affirmation of faith.

*Grant, Almighty God, that we, who have been redeemed from the old life of sin by our baptism into the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ, may be renewed in your Holy Spirit, and live in righteousness and true holiness; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.*

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I have had to postpone wedding preparation meetings (no actual weddings yet), and I know numerous clergy (and at least one judge) who have officiated at weddings (without crowds or usual celebrations) over the past two months. I cannot imagine how difficult it must be to put what is often years of planning on hold or through significant changes. Please keep all who are planning or celebrating weddings during this time in your prayers.

*O gracious and everliving God: Look mercifully upon those who come to you seeking your blessing, and assist them with your grace, that with true fidelity and steadfast love they may honor and keep the promises and vows they make; through Jesus Christ our Savior, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.*

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I have offered pastoral care and counselling to numerous families who are mourning the loss of loved ones, and I have officiated at one burial in the Garden of Resurrection the past two months. I know that people are finding alternate ways to gather people together to mourn, but I also know this has been a particular challenge for those who mourn and remain physically distant from their loved ones. Please keep all who have died and those who mourn in your prayers; pray that God will bless them with the knowledge that through the resurrection of Christ we will see our loved ones again.

*Father of all, we pray to you for those we love, but see no longer: Grant them your peace; let light perpetual shine upon them; and, in your loving wisdom and almighty power, work in them the good purpose of your perfect will; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

*Almighty God, Father of mercies and giver of comfort: Deal graciously, we pray, with all who mourn; that, casting all their care on you, they may know the consolation of your love; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

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My children are both “moving up” to new schools in the autumn and so their “moving up” ceremonies will likely be held in some online format. In addition, one of my sons is making the move from Cub Scouts to Boy Scouts later this week, and that ceremony will not take on its usual form. My nephew and numerous former Confirmation Class youths are graduating from high school this spring. I also have numerous former Confirmation Class young adults who are graduating from college this spring. And... I know numerous candidates for the priesthood who have just finished Seminary and held online graduation ceremonies. Please don't underestimate the profound sense of “missing out” that many of our young people (and their parents and grandparents) are going through and will go through in this time. If and when there are local graduation celebrations in Pelham or in your community, please try to support them in any way you can. Please keep all graduates in your prayers.

*Almighty God, the fountain of all wisdom: Enlighten by your Holy Spirit those who teach and those who learn, that, rejoicing in the knowledge of your truth, they may worship you and serve you from generation to generation; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.*

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Many people have made jarring and painful transitions in their employment and workplace. Many people are now working at home. Many people have lost their jobs or been furloughed. Many people who never assumed their workplaces were “risky environments” are now considered essential employees who are most at risk of coming into contact with the coronavirus. Many people are trying to make ends meet with much less income. Many people are waiting for their businesses to reopen so that they can go back to work or fully reopen. Please keep all who are struggling with employment and income changes in your prayers.

*Almighty God our heavenly Father, you declare your glory and show forth your handiwork in the heavens and in the earth: Deliver us in our various occupations from the service of self alone, that we may do the work you give us to do in truth and beauty and for the common good; for the sake of him who came among us as one who serves, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.*

*Heavenly Father, we remember before you those who suffer want and anxiety from lack of work. Guide the people of this land so to use our public and private wealth that all may find suitable and fulfilling employment, and receive just payment for their labor; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

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Many people are alone. Their houses of worship, community centers, and gathering places are closed. Their friends and family cannot visit. Many people cannot easily connect to the outside world; they do not have computers, tablets, or smart phones. Please keep all who are alone or lonely in your prayers. This week I am sending a few pre-programed (with links to our Zoom Chat and YouTube Worship) Kindle Fire Tablets to parishioners who do not have computers, tablets, or smart phones. We will find a way to get WiFi or simply fill up the device with content once a month. If you know a parishioner who might benefit from a Kindle Fire Tablet, please let me know.

*Almighty God, whose Son had nowhere to lay his head: Grant that those who live alone may not be lonely in their solitude, but that, following in his steps, they may find fulfillment in loving you and their neighbors; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

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Many people are now trying to educate their children from home while also working or looking for employment. This is a challenge for teachers, children, and parents alike, and it is essential to the well being of all children that they get a good education. Please give thanks for the efforts of our teachers, school administrators, parents, and guardians. Keep them and all children in your prayers.

*Almighty God, heavenly Father, you have blessed us with the joy and care of children: Give us calm strength and patient wisdom as we bring them up, that we may teach them to love whatever is just and true and good, following the example of our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.*

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Many people are still sick, gravely ill, and dying. A good portion of the illness we hear about is due to Covid-19, and we must keep them in our prayers as well as those who minister to and treat them. There are also many people awaiting surgeries or procedures that have been put on hold. Many others are experiencing health challenges that have been greatly complicated by the presence of this very contagious virus and the medical resources required to fight it and treat victims. Please keep all who suffer from any physical ailment or sickness and all who minister to them in your prayers.

*Heavenly Father, giver of life and health: Comfort and relieve all those who are sick, and give your power of healing to those who minister to their needs, that they may be strengthened in their weakness and have confidence in your loving care; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

*Sanctify, O Lord, those whom you have called to the study and practice of the arts of healing, and to the prevention of disease and pain. Strengthen them by your life-giving Spirit, that by their ministries the health of the community may be promoted and your creation glorified; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

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Life and time move on, but God is with us no matter what. Love your neighbor as yourself, love one another as Christ loves us. Continue to pray for those around you, for your neighbors, for your families, and for yourself.

*This is another day, O Lord. I know not what it will bring forth, but make me ready, Lord, for whatever it may be. If I am to stand up, help me to stand bravely. If I am to sit still, help me to sit quietly. If I am to lie low, help me to do it patiently. And if I am to do nothing, let me do it gallantly. Make these words more than words, and give me the Spirit of Jesus. Amen.*

You all remain in my prayers. God bless you, if you need anything please don't hesitate to call. My cell is 914-471-0260.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matthew Hossie Mead". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

The Reverend Matthew Hossie Mead, Rector