

March 13, 2020

Dear Family of St. James',

The story that keeps coming to mind these days is from Luke 8:23-25 (the story also appears in Mark and Matthew). Jesus and his disciples are in a fishing boat on the Sea of Galilee and Jesus falls asleep. Soon, the winds kick up and the rains come pouring down and the boat is being tossed upon the waves that are crashing around it. A major storm is upon them and they are frightened. The boat begins to fill with water and the disciples urgently wake up Jesus. Wake up! We are going to sink! Upon awaking, Jesus commands the storm to cease. The rain stops, the winds die down, the waves calm. Jesus then turns to his mighty band of disciples and reminds them of faith. Faith - that kernel that each of us has deep within us, the treasure we can always access, the elixir to so many of our fears.

We are in the midst of a storm, no doubt. The winds and waters are battering us about. Under normal circumstances we would be able to weather that storm together in our own little boat during our regular Sunday and Wednesday services. We cannot do that right now, and while we might be in our homes alone, we are not alone. We are not disconnected from one another. Rather, we are connected through our faith in Jesus Christ and in our common prayer.

The great gift of the Episcopal Church is our Prayer Book. The Book of Common Prayer allows us to all say the same words, the same prayers, as one Body, just as we would in corporate worship. The Prayer Book offers us a rich resource of varied options. Within it, you will find individual prayers, different prayer services, words of comfort and strength.

Beginning this Sunday and for every Sunday we cannot meet in person, we will be offering a Morning Prayer service and sermon through our website. **On Saturday afternoon, I will send another email with the link and instructions.** As part of this offering, we will include a document of the service that you can use to follow along. However, if you have a Book of Common Prayer, I encourage you to pull it off the shelf and use it instead.

If you do not have a Book of Common Prayer at home and would like to borrow one from the church, please let me know and I will make sure one gets delivered to you. Email me directly at lori@saintj.com. If you would rather pick one up, we will have a supply on the porch of the Little Church on Saturday from 9:30 -10:30. There are also online resources that will be included on our website.

Jesus reminds his disciples of faith in a time of turbulence, which in turns, reminds us. We have the greatest resource at our fingertips - the connection with our Savior who never leaves us, who never fails us, who not only weathers the storms with us, but calms them in our own hearts.

Please reach out if you are in need. You can call upon either me, Reverend Bill (bhale@saintj.com), or the staff. We stand ready to support you in any way we are able.

Be well, stay connected, and pray for each other.

Lori+