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## *Parish Notices: March 18, 2020*

**From the Very Rev. Sam Candler  
Via Zoom**

Grace to you, and peace, deep peace, in Jesus Christ our Lord!

I am Sam Candler, dean of the Cathedral of St. Philip, in Atlanta, Georgia; and I greet you from my own social distance! Wow. I have named this season, The Season of Social Distance, and today is Wednesday in the First Week of Social Distance. March 18, 2020.

The entire Cathedral Staff remains committed to engaging and encouraging Christian community in these times. We are intentionally isolated from each other physically, and that social distance is good and healthy. We are engaging in Social Distance For The Common Good.

In the interest of creative Christian community, the Canon Staff and I will start a new practice today. Starting right now, we plan to go online every Wednesday evening, at 6:15 pm, to deliver "Parish Notices." Each Wednesday's remarks, short ones, will be different. They may be words of encouragement or inspiration. They may be announcements and information. The video will be recorded and saved for access throughout the week on our Cathedral website.

So: here's the first one! It is in two parts! The first part is a very short exhortation to stay in relationship. The second part, at the end, is an announcement!

The exhortation: Seek relationship! My Cathedral Times newsletter article this week is actually a summary of what I intended to be my Wednesday Lenten presentation, titled "Righteousness and Holy Relationship." I believe that the classical Christian word, "righteousness" can be imaginatively understood to mean "relationship." To be righteous, in the sight of God, is to be in relationship.

Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as relationship! When we say that the righteous live by faith, I think that means that "Those in relationship live by faith!" You can read my Cathedral Times newsletter article this week for more explanation.

Thus, our challenge during this pandemic, during this season of social distance, is to stay in relationship. To live by faith by practicing holy relationship, even at a distance. That relationship can occur with a phone call, an email, a text, a smile, and definitely a prayer. Prayer connects us. But please do practice self-distancing, physically, and wash your hands!

My second point this evening is a response to the question on everyone's minds. How long will this last? In particular, for how long will the Cathedral of St. Philip be closed to gatherings and public worship?

Surely we all understand that there is no way we can answer that question definitively. We still do not know when we can safely and healthfully resume use of the Cathedral space. We do not want to transmit false expectations, either negatively or positively!

However, for the sake of planning and responsibility, we can say this: **We do not expect to resume use of the Cathedral campus until after Easter Day, after April 12, 2020.** Thus, we expect to observe and honor our Holy Week and Easter traditions in some different manner this year. We do not know any particulars right now.

But I rather look forward to how we can meet this challenge with creativity and imagination! No matter what

transpires between now and April 12, we anticipate celebrating Holy Week with both pain and joy, as we usually do. The manner and specifics of our prayer and liturgy will be different this year! But the truth of our prayer and liturgy will be as powerful as always.

Deep Grace and Deep Peace to you, in the Healing Spirit of Christ. AMEN.

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