

Pastoral Care at St Stephen's

The new sheltering in place directive has spurred St Stephen's to implement all kinds of new and creative venues for pastoral care. We continue to pivot in the ways that we care for each other and our neighbors, as new restrictions emerge, so that we can stay connected during this time of physical-distancing.

Just this week, we livestreamed a joint Sunday service in partnership with our Mother Parish Christ Church, Sausalito. Dozens of small groups and meetings happened via Zoom and FaceTime. Scores of check-in phone calls were made. Orchids were delivered to isolated parishioners; groceries bought and delivered; needed medicines dropped off; fresh baked cookies delivered! Parishioners are seeing needs and stepping in to help with getting food and supplies to those who can't get out, cutting the grass, sharing inspirational writings, prayers, and humorous memes. All these touches strengthen our bonds and set up new systems to care for and serve each other going forward. We urge you to think about how you can help someone who might need a hand and encouragement.

Here at St Stephen's, you can direct pastoral care needs in this way:

- for emergencies, the Emergency Pastoral Line 415-328-8812.
- to communicate pastoral needs or suggestions, email the office Elizabeth at ststephenschurch.org
- go to **St Stephen's Central** on the website by clicking that link at StStephensChurch.org for the latest updates on worship streaming, Zoom classes and meetings, community news, and changes in operations.
- the office is working on a pastoral care grid by collating mailing lists and Coffee Connections groups, so that we can divide the membership into smaller care groups for sustained "local" check-ins. More information to come as this project develops.

The spirit of care, compassion, and concern thrives in this community and it is heart-warming to see how our good instincts are spurring us to new, creative ways of connecting.

As Lynn Unger suggests in her poem *Pandemic*, when we cannot reach out our hands, "Reach out your heart./Reach out your words./Reach out all the tendrils of compassion that move, invisibly, where we cannot touch."

May the peace of God which passes all understanding be with you!

The Rev'd Christine Trainor