



ST. MATTHEW'S CHURCH  
BEDFORD, NEW YORK

Dear Members and Friends of St. Matthew's,

Yesterday we received official word from Bishop Dietsche: *"I am now calling for the complete suspension of public worship for the coming eight weeks (up to May 17), but with a review of the policy immediately following Easter."* You can read the [full letter here](#).

Your clergy, Wardens and Vestry, and parish staff have been anticipating this announcement, and we are well-equipped to handle the current circumstances. While the situation is far from ideal for any of us, obviously these shifts are necessary and prudent.

For the time being, our offices and church will be closed. This means all planned gatherings and meetings have been cancelled until the given requirements change.

But our ministry is very much *not* suspended. We will provide ways for you to worship remotely and will continue to be ready to meet your individual pastoral needs. Your phone calls to the office (914-234-9636) will be answered, and appropriate staff or clergy will respond. Please do not hesitate to get in touch with any questions or needs. Likewise, the Children's Chapel will be open (Mon – Fri, 9 am-4 pm) for anyone who would like to use it for private prayer.

Each Sunday our 10 am service will be live-streamed [via our website](#). We hope you will tune in for that time of worship from the comforts of your home. One parishioner who did so last week wrote: "I loved the online Service today. I absolutely felt the presence of the Lord in my home. Thanks!!!..." More information about live-streaming, and a handful of our other fresh resources are included below.

We will be sending out short "Blessed Little Thought" video devotions from your clergy each weekday at noon. Here is the first one in that series:



While these are challenging times, I feel certain that we can meet them with grace and confidence. The sooner we do so, the sooner we will all be able get back to our old ways, but with boatloads of newfound gratitude. Perhaps the best way to end this letter is with a prayer: O God, you know us to be set in the midst of so many and great dangers, that by reason of the frailty of our nature we cannot always stand upright: Grant us such strength and protection as may support us

in all dangers; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.  
In Christ's love,



The Rev. John A. Zahl, Rector

Cell Phone: (843) 814-6582



### Live-Streaming Worship & Bulletin Information

How fortunate we are that our recent church renovations included wiring our parish for live-streaming. This allows us to easily pivot to an online worship experience on Sunday mornings. You can tune into the service directly from our website: <http://www.stmatthewsbedford.org/>.

Just scroll down until you see the 10-winged Dove square with the words "Live Stream Service" (just below the service times on our home page). Click the dove to begin streaming the service, or to view our most recent service. The feed will go live at 9:55 am. In order to easily follow along with the service, you will find on that same page, a downloadable .pdf of the week's service bulletin, including the completely liturgy, hymns, and lectionary readings. In addition, this same bulletin for the day will be emailed to the entire congregation every Sunday morning at 8 am.

If you would like to check out our Sermon Archives, [click here](#).

### Church School Update

Dear St. Matthew's families with children and youth,



As you have read above, COVID-19 has changed some of the *ways we will do church* but not the fact that *we still are the church*. With that in mind, Tara Deeks and I will continue to minister to your children and youth in multiple ways while church services are suspended.

First, we will be sending a weekly "ChurchSchool@Home" video reflecting on the Church School theme for this year--"God's Family." Look for those in your email. Second, we are excited to announce the release of a "St. Matthew's Songbook" with lyrics to all of the songs we sing in Church School. The songbook is meant to be used alongside videos of each of those songs performed by Mark Weigel and Rev. Drew, which will be released weekly. Third, we will be sending five brief and interactive videos as part of a "HolyWeek@Home" series to help your whole family engage with Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday, and Easter Day at home since we can't gather for worship together at church.

And of course, we encourage your family worship with us on Sunday Mornings at 10 am via the live-stream on our website.

May God be with you and your children during this trying time. Please don't hesitate to reach out to me by email or cell phone (336-706-1105).

In Christ,

Drew+

The Rev. Andrew M. Courtright  
*Assistant Minister*

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### Further Resources

We highly recommend this Forum from Christ Church, Charlotte. It is the best, most informative, and level-headed presentation from a church on the current situation that we have seen yet:



Our favorite online ministry is Mockingbird Ministries, started and led by John's brother, David. Peruse their site (<https://mbird.com/>) for articles, podcasts, books, and insightful Christian social commentary, always with a hefty helping of grace.

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TO KNOW CHRIST AND TO MAKE HIM KNOWN

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[www.stmatthewsbedford.org](http://www.stmatthewsbedford.org)