



October 26, 2020

Dear Church of the Holy Spirit,

The peace of Christ be with you. The last time we shared the peace of Christ together in person in our sanctuary was on Sunday, March 8<sup>th</sup>. By that time, we were all learning that the coronavirus was spreading in the U.S. As a precaution, awkward though it was, I instructed us to not leave our sanctuary seats and simply smile or wave or bow reverentially to one another instead of sharing the peace in the lively and affectionate ways typical for our church. Little did we know then that this restriction would seem mild by the following Sunday as our nation went into a dramatic lock-down unlike anything any of us had experienced in our lifetime. Now, over seven months later, the virus infection rate is rising again in forty one states, leading scientists are warning of a greater surge in the coming winter months and uncertainty abounds as to when and how this pandemic will ease or end and therefore, when we will be able to gather together in person again.

The peace of Christ which we share with one another, whether in-person or from a distance, is the peace that Jesus shared with his disciples at the Last Supper when he said, *"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you... Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid."* (John 14:27). Peace is what Jesus shared with his disciples when he first appeared to them after his resurrection. The sharing of the peace of Christ is, quite literally, at the center of the liturgy of Holy Eucharist, and truly, of Christian theology itself. Christ's peace is a sign of forgiveness and reconciliation with God, one another and all creation. Christ's peace is God's gift of wholeness, salvation, which cannot be thwarted by any difficulty or trouble, including this pandemic.

In the midst of these troubled and challenging days, Christ continues to give to us the gift of peace and calls us to share the peace of Christ and to be the peace of Christ in the world. You, the Episcopal Church of the Holy Spirit (ECHS), have been faithful in this extraordinary time in sharing Christ's peace.

Our ministries and practices have had to adapt and change but this is happening and you are continuing to stay true to our mission: *to be a welcoming, loving Christian community committed to serving God, one another and our neighbors.* Thank you for your faithfulness in all the ways you have continued to share Christ's peace, love, hope and light!

Thank you too for your faithfulness in giving financially to ECHS. Throughout this year, our finances have remained strong and ahead of budget. Currently we are on track to meet or surpass our 2020 budget. This is tremendous and a testament to your steadfastness and generosity. Thank you! In planning our 2021 budget and in taking into account the great uncertainty of this time, our Vestry and Finance Committee has decided to keep our 2021 budget on par (with a few minor exceptions) with the 2020 budget. A copy of the 2021 proposed budget may be found on our ECHS webpage. This budget reflects our mission and ministry priorities and will require us all to give faithfully, and generously of all the gifts that God has so generously given to us.

This season of stewardship at ECHS is an opportunity for each of us to take stock of God's gifts in our lives and of God's call to us to present to God an offering of our time, energy, skills, and financial resources to the mission and ministries of the Church. Please prayerfully consider how God is leading you to share and offer your gifts of time, talent and treasure in and through the life and ministry of Church of the Holy Spirit. Enclosed are the 2021 ECHS ministry commitment forms. Please complete and return both the yellow "2021 Volunteer Ministries Form" and the green "2021 Financial Pledge Form" before Wednesday, November 18th. These forms, as well as a description of all the ECHS volunteer ministries may be found on the ECHS webpage. If you would like more information, or wish to discuss your gifts, please contact any member of the Stewardship committee or any Vestry member.

Peace is God's gift to us now and always. As God's people, in our lives and ministry together, may we faithfully abide in and share this unsurpassed gift, the peace of Christ.

With gratitude, David McNair and the 2021 ECHS Stewardship Team:  
Peggy Barnes, Colleen Boll, Bendik Clark, Jim Haaga, Loraine Hilty, Dn. Ty Jones, Stephanie McCullough, Barbara Moloney, Bill Sewell (Treasurer).