

Greetings,

In this time of uncertainty with COVID-19, there are so many things that affect us that often we are overwhelmed by all the aspects that we must deal with. Personal and family health, accessibility to basic food and supplies, church worship, church family connections, isolation, work, and of course finances. We all are family. At our Diocesan office, we are working hard to help you through these times. Yes, our office has been closed following the guidelines given to us by the State of Maryland and health officials, but our staff is working harder than ever. Most of us are working from our homes with some small exceptions for essential operations that need to be done on site. You can still reach us by phone although it is being answered remotely. You can reach us by e-mail, and we will be monitoring this as much as possible. We are committed to help you any way we can.

Bishop San quickly provided resources at the diocese's expense to give you Zoom Room for virtual worship services and other connection times needed by the local church. We have provided at least 15 connections so far. If you have not gotten this yet but still want it please contact Joanne Fisher (joanne@dioceseofeaston.org) for assistance in purchase or training.

Not only are we at your service, The Episcopal Church (TEC) and Church Pension Group (CPG) are finding ways to help you also. Attached is a letter from May Kate Wold, CEO and President of CPG that details steps they have taken to assist you. One portion of the letter mentions a possible waiver of clergy assessments for up to two months if this disaster has affected your ability to function. We know that our worship services will be discontinued for a minimum of 8 weeks and income will be severely affected by loss of plate income, if not by other means. If you feel your budget and resources are not adequate to weather this storm, I urge you to apply for this waiver. Please contact me for assistance with this process. We will be formulating what documentation we will need in the next few days. My understanding from CPG is that the form mentioned in the attachment is being revised. We will post the current form and other needs for application on our website under "COVID-19 UPDATE*". In the meantime, if you have questions about this send me an email with the subject "Pension Assessment Waiver" and I will reach out to you as soon as possible.

I am also trying to contact the State of Maryland about grants for nonprofits from the Maryland Small Business COVID-19 Emergency Relief Grant Fund. The website indicates that nonprofits may be eligible for grants up to \$10,000 not to exceed 3 months of cash operating expenses. Each church has its own EIN number and may be eligible to apply. I will need to look at this more before we can be comfortable that it will apply to our churches. We will post information about this on the website also.

For existing grant applications or other funding uses in the future, it may be helpful for us to gather some data to assess the effect this disaster has on our income. We would like the churches to provide us with data on a weekly basis strictly on a voluntary basis. This would allow us to see the drop in income compared to the budgeted income of each church and would be able to report the findings only as a group report with possible highs and lows within

the data range. We would not disclose individual church information except to the reporting church. We would ask for weekly operating income figures of just 2 categories, pledges and plate offerings and compare that to your weekly expectations from your yearly budget. Knowing how this is affecting us is helpful for both you and the diocese as a whole. We would ask that you email us with the figures so that we can input them into a spreadsheet. This would be temporary until the situation stabilizes. Your help with this would be very much appreciated. Please let me know if you are willing to assist with this effort.

If there is anything that you need during this time of crisis, please let us know. We are here for you.

Peace,

Art Kendall
Finance Administrator
art@dioceseofeaston.org