To the Clergy and People of the Episcopal Diocese of Kentucky:

As Bishop Diocesan and chief pastor, I am given oversight over the doctrine, discipline, and worship of the Church. Concerning our common life of worship, I am issuing the following directive. Effective March 20, all in-person worship and parish meetings, studies, and gatherings of any kind are suspended until further notice. All should prepare for this suspension to last through the end of May. I reserve the right to revise or extend this directive as this health emergency and a myriad of other issues unfold in the commonwealth, nation, and world.

To the deacons and priests canonically resident in this diocese or those licensed by me to exercise their ministry in this diocese, a pastoral directive has the weight of canon, and is to be followed without exception. Our diocesan Standing Committee supports this directive.

Social ministry in our congregations may continue in a modified way following the guidelines established by the Center for Disease Control (CDC), Governor Beshear’s office, and health officials in the commonwealth and local communities. Serving those in need is especially important at this time.

I commend all for seeking to maintain worship online, for creating networks to interact with parishioners in order to maintain our connections as the beloved community, and those who are conducting business and governance meetings. During this time, priests who wish to celebrate the Eucharist for an online service may consider those who are viewing to be fully present for the celebration. Thus, for the duration of this directive, a second person need not be physically present for the Eucharist to be consecrated.

Once it is determined that we can gather again for in-person worship, I will grant permission for the liturgical calendar to be set aside in order to celebrate Easter Day using John 20 (empty tomb) or Easter Evening Luke 24 (road to Emmaus).

In his March 17 letter A Word to the Church, Presiding Bishop Michael Curry wrote: "The primacy of love in the Gospels is given its fullest expression in the shadow of the cross. This way of unselfish, sacrificial love, the way of the cross, is the way of God and the way of life. It is out of this love for our fellow humans, our neighbors, that we forego the blessing of being physically together for worship. In so doing we seek to promote health and healing needed at this time."

May we continue to live out in new ways our Baptismal Covenant to proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ, and to seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving our neighbors as ourselves. Know of my prayers for you all. Let us support one another in these days ahead. God bless and keep you.
Glory to God whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine. Glory to God from generation to generation in the Church, and in Christ Jesus for ever and ever. (Ephesians 3:20,21)

Your brother in Christ,

The Rt. Rev. Terry A. White
Bishop of Kentucky