

Update from the Protestant Chaplain and the Chaplain to the College

Bailey Fischer, Valerie

March 29, 2020

Good morning,

Hello everyone, I hope you are doing well as possible during these challenging times. I would like to send out a weekly update, feel free to share this letter to others and if you would like to be removed from this list, please email me and follow the instructions at the end of the email. Please fill out the survey (also at the end of the email) so that we can know how to support you at this time.

Life in Williamstown update

Things are so quiet on campus. Almost all of the offices are operating virtually and the students living on campus are sheltering in place and observing social distancing. Almost everything is closed except the grocery stores and the pharmacy. Spring is here and the weather has been nice. It's raining today, which means mud season is also here.

Many of us have been concerned about New York. The signs of people hiding in their Berkshire/Williamstown summer homes is also here -- it's a reminder that we are all going to have to work together to get through this situation. The only publicly confirmed cases in Williamstown is in a rehabilitation center which went from one case to 14 in one week.

Rev. Valerie's Reflections

I hesitate to think hard about these times except to say these are moments of great significance and sometimes it's enough to just watch as the clouds gather and to wait and hope. I want to approach these times as a listener and learner. I cannot assume that I can offer wisdom at this time except for the timelessness of the principles of being very good to each other and to yourself. Although these times are of great significance, sometimes the best thing we can do is the small acts of kindness. And if you find your strength faltering, take time to be still, reach out to that which gives you meaning -- for religious people, this is your faith and spiritual practices and for all, you might find yourself surprised by what gives meaning to your life, now that so much is being held in suspended animation. Ask yourself, now that life is on hold, what has managed to keep spinning and giving you meaning, peace and strength?

A Sermon:

About once or twice a semester, I have been invited to preach at the local Episcopal church. I am enclosing a sermon that I gave yesterday at St. John's Episcopal Church (it was recorded with a few people observing social distancing). I am sending the link because the service music is really nice so regardless of your faith tradition, at least enjoy the music.

From St. John's Church, Williamstown, MA: Click on the link below to watch our celebration of the Holy Eucharist for the Fifth Sunday of Lent.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PyWg_O6Pjr

The link here copy of the leaflet:

https://mcusercontent.com/ac671a5059ddfdd70111f95f7/files/9168a210-3346-41e7-be68-631b9550d129/expanded_Sunday_service_leaflet_3_29_20_5_LENT_.pdf

A copy of Valerie's sermon:

https://mcusercontent.com/ac671a5059ddfdd70111f95f7/files/eb50f46e-9fd0-41cc-8fb5-8fad14000212/5_LENT_YEAR_A_2020.pdf

INFORMATION AT THE END OF THE EMAIL:

Protestant Chaplain Survey

Please click here to fill out a brief survey so that I as Protestant Chaplain (and Chaplain to the College) and we in the chaplains' office know how to support you.

Appointments with Rev. Valerie -- Office Hours Thursday Afternoons

For now, I am setting up office hours on Thursday afternoon. If you are interested in meeting with Rev. Valerie through Google Hangout, please click here to sign up for a 30 minute slot. If you would like to meet at another time, please email me and I'll find a time that works for you.