

Rockwell House Episcopal Campus Ministry in St. Louis

2020 has been quite a year so far, for us as for everyone. In all the ways you would expect: in the ways where our community has been sent home to be all-virtual, in the ways where people are lonely and scattered, in the ways where we are not allowed to share food and sacraments in the ways we are used to, in the ways where the world is literally and figuratively on fire.

But despite everything, our ministry has flourished this year.

Getting sent home at spring break led us to get creative. We got a lot more comfortable with sharing actively in intercessory prayer for one another and for the world. We've studied Scripture and shared strategies for engaging in civic life and justice work. We packed our spring study retreat into a box and sent it to students' homes along with crispy treats and Play-Doh and chocolate. We celebrated the graduation of another large senior class, and tried not to worry too much about how few students that left to return in the fall. At the insistence of our students, we kept meeting right through the summer - sometimes for prayer and study and discussion, sometimes for game nights and text banking. All spring and summer, we kept asking the same question: "What is it we value about gathering around the communion table and the dinner table, and how can we tend those values in new ways?"

This fall, we've focused our efforts on turning our usual activities inside out. Our smaller midweek Bible study is now the focal point of our week, meeting online for discussions of Scripture and social justice. We can't share meals around one table for now, so we deliver one meal a week to students' homes to eat together over Zoom. Eucharists are shorter, smaller, outdoors, and no longer taken for granted. And we have multiple peer-led small groups meeting for mutual support in their faith lives and their everyday lives.

Submitted by the Rev. Beth Scriven