

June 26, 2020

Dear Friends,

Thank you so much for your faithfulness through the weeks of the Coronavirus pandemic. The time of separation has been difficult in a number of ways. Life as we knew it has changed, and will continue to be different for the foreseeable future. However, I am writing today to share some good news about our common life as Christ Church.

Beginning on Sunday July 5, and continuing each Sunday through Labor Day, there will be an in-person worship service available at 9:00 am in our sanctuary. The service will be similar to what we've been doing in our on-line worship, except there will be no congregational singing. We will continue to share in a "spiritual communion" as no bread or wine will be distributed, at least during Phase II of Connecticut's Reopening.

Please know that **on-line worship will continue to be available** for anyone who is not ready to return in person. We want all of our Christ Church family, first and foremost, to remain safe. In particular, members over the age of 65, who are reported to be the most vulnerable to the effects of the virus, are encouraged to carefully and prayerfully consider when the best time to return might be.

As we return, we will be following guidelines developed for Episcopal churches throughout the Diocese of Connecticut. These include the following:

- Anyone who has a cough or fever, or any virus symptoms, should stay at home and participate by video or on-line worship.
- Parishioners over age 65 are encouraged to consider staying home until the threat of COVID-19 is even more reduced.
- Worship gatherings will be limited to 25% of the Fire Marshall's total occupancy number, or a maximum of 100 people, by order of the Governor of Connecticut.
- Worshipers are asked to enter the building through the main doors leading to the sanctuary, keeping social distancing in mind.
- **Masks or face coverings will be required to be worn by all.** If you are physically unable to wear a mask, please worship at home during this period. Please bring your own when you come to church. However, a limited number of masks will be available at the church for those who arrive without one.

- You will be asked to “sign-in” as you enter, in case we need to reach you following the service.
- A hand sanitizing station has been provided at the entrance to the building, and those arriving are asked to use it.
- Pews have been marked with tape to designate where to sit in order to maintain social distancing. It is suggested that families be seated in one of the “outer” pews, and individuals be seated in the pews along the center aisle. Please do observe social distancing guidelines. Ushers will be prepared to assist with questions.
- Bathrooms will be available for use by one person at a time. Touchless light switches, soap dispensers, and paper towel dispensers have been installed in both bathrooms on the main floor. We ask users to wipe down the bathroom with the supplies provided after use.
- Coffee hour will be suspended until after Labor Day. We ask that you keep social distancing in mind as you exit the worship service.

The parish office will be open beginning July 6, and will observe Summer Hours until after Labor Day. Summer Hours are Monday through Thursday from 9 am until noon. Please observe the following if you wish to visit the parish office:

- Please do not come to the building if you have a fever, cough, or other viral symptoms.
- We ask visitors to make use of the hand-sanitizing station just inside the glass doors when arriving.
- Face masks are required.
- The office door will be locked. Sue will admit visitors, one-at-a-time.
- When waiting to be admitted to the office, please observe social distancing from others who may also be waiting to enter.

As I write this letter I am aware that this list of guidelines does not make our church sound very welcoming! Please be assured that they have been created with the pastoral care of all members of our community in mind. We want everyone to be safe and healthy, especially while the danger of COVID-19 still exists. To that end, a “Covenant for Regathering” has been created by the Diocese of Maryland, and adapted for use by other dioceses throughout the church, and it is included with this mailing. Please do read it, as I believe it is a somewhat more gentle way of saying what is meant by all of the guidelines that are being put in place at this time.

If you have questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at [mompat101@aol.com](mailto:mompat101@aol.com). I look forward to seeing you in-person whenever that time comes. Meanwhile, please stay safe and well!

With blessings and peace,

Pat+

# Covenant for Regathering

In response to the current COVID-19 pandemic I promise, with God's help and to the best of my ability, to abide by the guidelines of the Diocese of Connecticut and Christ Church for participation in the life of my congregation.

In fulfillment of our Baptismal Covenant (BCP pages 304-305) I will strive to:

Love my neighbor as myself, by...

- Wearing a mask or scarf over my nose and mouth at all times in church buildings, except momentarily to receive the sacrament or lead worship through an assigned speaking part, and following public health guidelines for hand sanitizing and disinfecting
- Only attending worship if I am non-symptomatic for the COVID-19 virus or any other transmittable disease that could compromise the health of another congregant
- Abstaining from attending if doing so would put me at greater risk due to my own health status

Respect the dignity of every human being, by...

- Making no physical contact with people beyond the members of my own household
- Maintaining a six foot or greater distance from other members of the congregation
- Respecting any requests for distance, masking and cleaning to ensure the safety and comfort level of others

Seek and serve Christ in all people, by...

- Trusting and supporting the decisions of both my diocesan and congregational leaders
- Staying connected with others in my community by telephone, video chat, email, US mail, or other safely-distanced methods