



August 27, 2020

Dear members, friends, and staff of Christ Church,

I write with an update and more information about our plans to re-gather for in-person worship.

Our re-gathering task force has been meeting throughout the summer and working on the list of requirements given to us by our bishops. The application form allowing us to enter Stage 2, as defined by our diocese, and resume in-person worship was presented to the Vestry at a meeting on Tuesday (August 25). The Vestry approved the application and the procedures outlined therein and it will now be sent to our bishops for their review and approval.

**We are making preparations to offer in-person worship at Christ Church on Sunday, October 4.** This assumes that the COVID-19 infection rate in our area remains stable and there are no further restrictions placed on us by our diocese, town, or the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. We also may need to delay that date based on our own evaluation and local circumstances.

Once we resume in-person worship we will continue to offer a second worship service that will be streamed on-line. We are planning for there to be an in-person worship service at 9:00 a.m. and the streamed service, with the same number of limited participants as we currently have, will shift to 11:00 a.m. It is intended that this pattern will continue until such time as we are able to offer both choral and congregational singing, at which time we will combine the in-person and streamed services and will evaluate the resumption of our usual 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. worship services.

I also want to reiterate some notes about worship from my letter of July 25. Please note a change from that original list in bold below regarding communion:

- Because of the physical distancing requirements our services will be limited to a number between 50 and 75, depending on how many members of the same household are able to sit together in a pew.
- As a result, we will be instituting a sign-up process both in order to determine attendance and also to gather information about who is attending for contact tracing purposes. We are also required to notify the Andover Board of Health, should anyone attending that service contract COVID-19.
- Masks will be required.
- **We are now authorized to distribute communion in the form of the bread only and so we are exploring and working toward the possibility of making our in-person worship services will be the weekly celebration of the Holy Eucharist.** Our

*Everyone is Welcome at God's Table ~ Christ Church Andover*

streamed service will continue to be the service of Morning Prayer on most weeks, with Holy Eucharist offered once per month.

- There will be a number of protocols, including specific instructions for entering and exiting the church, using the restrooms and hand-washing stations in the kitchen, and restrictions on movement while in the church.
- There will be no coffee hour or other social gathering prior to or following the services.
- There will be no singing, either by the congregation or choir.
- There will be no in-person church school, youth gatherings, or nursery care.
- We ask you NOT to attend if you are ill or unwell, or if you have been around others who are ill or feeling unwell, or you feel that you cannot wear a mask for the duration of the service.

**During the month of September we will be putting out further communication to prepare us all for in-person worship.** We welcome your questions as they will help us to provide as much clarity as we possibly can about our life together.

We are also actively working on our policies and procedures for other offerings: such as the gathering of small groups, opportunities for Christian formation for all ages, and our other worship opportunities on weekdays. Again, we will be in regular communication as those plans and decisions are finalized.

I wish to thank the re-gathering task force for their diligent work: Michael Marcinelli, Susan Bozorth, Barbara Bruns, Jane von Maltzahn, and Jon Vacik.

I continue to hold you all in my prayers as we remain members of the body of Christ and witnesses to God's love.

Blessings,

,



The Rev. Michael J. Hodges  
Rector