

CLARIFICATION ABOUT SINGING DURING WORSHIP

A message from Bishop Susan B. Haynes

August 11, 2020

Several have expressed confusion about the guidelines around the action of singing in worship during this first phase of regathering during Covid-19. We hope these clarifications will help.

- Congregational singing during PUBLIC worship is not permitted at this time. This includes public worship that is indoors or outdoors.
- Singing by a soloist, cantor or small group (4-6 people) is permitted in outdoor public worship when the singing is more than 30 feet away from any other person. Masks should be worn.
- Singing by a soloist, cantor or small group (4 people) is permitted in indoor public worship when the singer(s) are placed either in a balcony or in another room or behind a screen. Masks should be worn.
- Singing that is previously recorded to be used in virtual services may be done if singers are spaced at least 10-12 feet apart and do not face each other. This includes pre-recorded services and live-streamed services. Masks do not need to be worn provided that personnel in the church number below 10 persons. When these events are streamed or photographs of them are posted on social media, a statement should be made that this is not a public worship service.

As you might well imagine in this Diocese, there exist all sorts of opinions on the pandemic and the issues we face. Singing is a beloved activity which we all greatly miss; just as there are those who do not want to attend worship without congregational singing, there are also those who will not attend even an outdoor worship even if only one person is singing. To abstain from singing, except as the guidelines above mandate, is a sacrifice we make because we believe that abstaining will help to keep us all safe. Canon Roy Hoffman and I were privileged to be part of a zoom conference yesterday with Dr. Anthony Fauci. One of the most encouraging things Dr. Fauci said was that there WILL be an end to this pandemic. The day WILL return when we can resume our beloved worship in the ways that we love. That day is not now, but it will come. Meanwhile, we all try to do our part to beat this virus back.

BE JOYFUL IN THE LORD, ALL YOU LANDS; SERVE THE LORD WITH GLADNESS AND COME BEFORE HIS PRESENCE WITH A SONG. (Psalm 100:1)

What will the Church's song be during a time when our voice cannot produce the sound?