



June 5, 2020
Ember Friday

Friends in Christ,

As we enter the next phase of life in the time of Coronavirus, I am glad to say that we will start having opportunities for corporate worship here at St. Andrew's. It will look different than when we left nearly three months ago, and in the weeks and months ahead it will continue to change along the way.

Let me begin by saying that we will not yet open the 10 a.m. Sunday morning service beyond our current arrangement. I know that will be a disappointment to some, but to do so at this time would require the elimination of singing and chanting according to best practice guidelines. Such a change would be to the detriment not only of those present but also for the many others who will be joining the service from home.

We will, however, begin providing two additional means of engagement, one outdoors and one indoors. For those who would like to participate in either of these offerings, there are some important preliminary considerations:

- + Those at increased risk are highly encouraged to seriously consider whether they ought to attend services at this time.
- + Masks are required of all attendees, and we do not have any masks to provide for those who forget.
- + Appropriate distancing from others is to be practiced by all to avoid unnecessary contact while at church.

Beginning this Sunday, June 7, there will be a distribution of the Sacrament of the Eucharist on the back lawn of the church. Before getting to the details, let me stress that everyone who partakes of this option is reminded of Saint Paul's exhortation to carefully prepare before receiving the Sacrament (see "*An Exhortation*", BCP p. 316). We do this by first engaging with the Word of Scripture and the prayer of the Church, and only then do we approach the Sacrament.

Consequently, this option for receiving Communion may in no way be understood as a replacement of or alternative to participation in the liturgy but rather as a connected part of the whole of the day's Eucharistic worship. This is further illustrated by the fact that the hosts to be distributed will be consecrated as a part of the 10 a.m. livestream service.

Therefore, in order to receive the Sacrament of the Eucharist as described below, communicants are duly charged to participate in the Sunday livestream at 10 am or, if unable to join the service live, to pray through a recording of the day's service prior to reception.

The outdoor station will be available from 12 to 12:30 p.m. on the back lawn, and those who wish to receive are asked to observe the following procedures:

- + Park and say a prayer of preparation to refocus attention before exiting the vehicle. Particularly appropriate options include: "Prayer of Humble Access" (BCP, p. 337) and "66. Before Receiving Communion" (BCP, p. 834).
- + Proceed to the station, waiting for anyone ahead to finish receiving before approaching.
- + Receive Communion in the hand, step to the side, remove the mask as necessary, reverently consume, and replace the mask.
- + Return to the vehicle and before leaving say a prayer of thanksgiving such as "67. After Receiving Communion" (BCP, p. 834).

The second option will begin next Sunday, June 14. That is the reopening of the 8 a.m. Holy Eucharist: Rite I service. This may require flexibility on the part of some who wish to return to in-person services, and we appreciate your understanding as we navigate this new terrain. Should we reach attendance limits at 8 a.m., a second in-person service will be offered later in the day.

To make this possible, certain steps and precautions will be in place:

- + Attendance is capped at 10 for the time being. Please sign up online or contact Fr. Ben directly if you plan to attend.
- + Pews will be roped off to assist with appropriate distancing, and Prayer Books and Hymnals will be removed from the selected pews to limit points of contact and cleaning between services. Please bring your own Prayer Book or print off materials for use.
- + The offering plate will be available at the door to the Nave and will not be passed.
- + Communion will be in one kind, host only, and distributed standing with communicants waiting to consume the Sacrament until they have returned to their pew.
- + All other facilities, except the main floor restrooms, will be off limits during these times
- + This option and its stipulations also applies to the observance of Major Feast Days with Holy Eucharist services as announced

Please note that no one is being asked to compromise their conscience or well-being. For those who for whatever reason do not feel ready to return to church, that is understandable. We will continue to offer online resources including the 10 a.m. Sunday service. The process of reintegrating things like in-person worship into our lives will happen at a different pace for each individual and family, and God's grace is sufficient for us all.

We have been through something unprecedented in the course of any of our lives. It has led us to make hard decisions in the midst of an ever-changing landscape of new information on an almost daily basis. Thankfully, God has been with us in the midst of it all, and he will continue to minister to us in the days ahead as we begin to return step by step to the fullness of our life together.

In Christ,



Fr. Ben Hankinson, Rector
St. Andrew's Episcopal Church