

## NEW Regathering Protocol at St. Mark's



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

No sooner had we drafted a letter to you about how we would gather together in light of the pandemic beginning in June, the CDC has issued updated guidelines. Since approximately one-third of Americans are fully vaccinated and since our Bishop has updated its diocesan mandates, St. Mark's will be practicing the following protocol effective immediately:

- For fully vaccinated individuals, mask wearing and social distancing are optional, and
- For non-vaccinated individuals, mask wearing and social distancing are **highly recommended**.
- For the time being, guidelines for Holy Communion (bread only), will remain the same.

### The following will be in effect the weekend of May 22-23:

- Socially distanced sections: The side alcoves will be designated for parishioners wishing to be seated and socially distanced.
- Pews: Tape will be removed from all pews that aren't reserved for socially distanced seating. Please use your best judgement on where to sit. Though we are under less restrictions, we should still practice best practices as far as social distancing and hand washing are concerned.
- Communion: Parishioners seated in the main sections will come forward to standing stations to receive communion. For those seated in the designated socially distanced sections, a member of the clergy will bring communion to them.
- Hymnals/Book of Common Prayer: These books are returning to the pews. Remember to keep your hands clean and sanitized.
- Drive-Thru Communion: The last Sunday for Drive-Thru Communion will be May 23.
- If you are not yet in the position to worship in person but would still like to partake in the Eucharist, parishioners are encouraged to watch the live stream and arrange for a Lay Eucharistic Minister to administer Communion. The church office would be delighted to assist you in coordinating a visit.

### The following will begin on the weekend of May 29-30:

- Online Reservation System will no longer be in use, no reservations will be needed.

- Saturday evening Service (4:30 p.m.) will move indoors due to the summer heat/humidity. It will remain indoors through Labor Day. It will be evaluated to determine best course of action depending on lingering summer weather.
- A current sign, questions regarding health, will remain in the narthex. Another sign, smaller in nature, will be placed at the ramp door.

### Looking ahead:

- Offertory plates: They will continue to be in their current locations until further notice.
- Sunday Coffee Hour: Beginning on June 6, coffee hour will be back and will be held outdoors Under the Oaks (adjacent to the parking lot behind Gray Hall) after both the 8 a.m. & 9:30 a.m. services!
- The 9:30 a.m. Sunday morning service will continue to be live-streamed. We are continuing to develop this to make it a better, more engaging, worshipful experience.

We will continue to seek guidance from the CDC and our bishop's office. These are anxious times, and I ask that everyone be respectful of the decision others have made for themselves. Please be gracious toward those who aren't yet comfortable removing their masks—the pandemic still rages on. I'd also like to remain hopefully optimistic that we are over a hurdle, yet let's remain vigilant and responsive to the need to adjust again. As we continue to monitor and adapt, I'm grateful for your understanding and patience during this time.

Blessings,

**Mike+**

