



Lent 2023

at Church of the Holy Spirit

Dear Friends,

Please take some care to read this note. Things will be different for the season of Lent.

Note: 8 am service remains the same.

The prelude will begin before 10 am as parishioners enter the Sanctuary. We will be skipping some opening parts such as the poems in order to keep our service timely. The Sanctuary seating will be organized into small groups accommodating 6 to 12 parishioners.

You'll remember that there are two main parts to our service: The Word and The Communion. Following the Gospel reading, we will turn toward each other in small group areas. The conversation facilitator for each group will offer lead questions to guide our thoughts and responses to the Gospel reading. This is not a quiz. There are no wrong answers. Absolutely no arguing! You may also simply pass and just listen in to the others in your group. I will be facilitating the online zoom group. These conversations will only take 15 minutes. The conversation period will be followed by a brief summary of each group's perspectives and then a briefer homily by Fr. Phil. The service then continues with the Creed as usual. See the next page as to the actual format.

Please note: 8 am remains the same. For those who would prefer a formal sermon and traditional liturgy, this will continue every week and can be viewed at any time online.

Members of your Vestry planned this. Let me add that in my dozens of conversations with members since October, and even in briefer conversations at many house blessings, you have been asking for greater community experience - times of sharing with each other - during and as a part of our worship. It wasn't enough to just sit and listen, or enough for you to say responses to prayers and readings.

So for this Lent, we will integrate those sentiments directly into our style of worship.

Lent is about preparing for joy. That might sound odd, given how we all grew up, but the original purpose of this season was to prepare with acts of care, kindness, and compassion for the annual celebration of the Resurrection and the meaningfulness of life in Christ. In spite of a world gone wild, we can be creatively centered in tranquility, patience, and joy.

That's our plan: Tranquility, patience, and joy. In communion with each other.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Faithfully,

The Very Rev. Philip Carr-Jones

The only way through is through. The better way is through together. The best way through together is in Christ.

Key Conversation Principles

All May, None Must.	(Its ok to simply listen as well as to share)
Be Self-Aware.	(Be aware of how long you are talking - don't hog)
Soften my heart/Open my mind.	(You don't have to agree. Everyone has a different take)
Listening is the same as loving.	(Attend to people where they are and don't interrupt)
It's not about right or wrong.	(Share your own point of view rather than comment on others)

Sharing the Good News

Each week, the Deacon will read the Gospel as usual. The people then sit in groups and the facilitator of each group asks, "In today's Gospel reading, what did you hear Jesus offering? to you? to us? to the world?" The facilitator asks one person to briefly respond and then they in turn invite another person in the group to respond. The idea is to listen rather than answer back, neither approve nor challenge another person. This continues until all have been invited. *It is always ok to say "pass" and invite someone else to go.*

The facilitator then asks "What kind of resistance to Jesus did you hear?" In the same way as the first question, the leader invites a member to share, who when finished, invites another person to speak. Again, open listening is the key to this second round. *It is always ok to say "pass" and invite someone else to go.*

The third question is more conversational. The leader asks, "What are the social pressures or temptations that you need to resist or renounce in order to accept what Jesus is offering?" The leader invites participants to respond and converse with each other. There is no need to agree or disagree. Listen and engage. If God can't make two snowflakes alike, there is no reason any of us should have the same experience about God.

If there are questions about the Gospel that members would like the preacher to address, they can be brought up at any time during the sharing.

"Five minute mark(s)" will be announced to the assembly so we can all conclude our 15 minutes of group sharing together. The conversation continues with each facilitator sharing briefly with the whole assembly the general thoughts representing their group's impressions and presenting the questions that might have surfaced.

The priest then culminates the Gospel encounter with a response and homily.