

Returning to the Sanctuary and Beginning Hybrid Worship

What to Expect on Sunday, October 24

ARRIVING

- Parking: The garage will be open, and as always, parking is available on the surrounding streets, and along the median on New York Avenue on Sundays.
- Masks: Everyone over 2 years of age must wear a mask (covering your nose and mouth) in the building. Currently, DC is mandating that masks be worn inside public spaces, and the Session has adopted this policy for the building until further notice. If you forget your mask, we will have extras available.
- Construction: Bathrooms and the HVAC system will be functional. However, there will still be several finishing tasks to be completed by the construction crew. Some spaces may look different than before. For example, you will see new pipes, some of which will eventually be encased, while others will be insulated and painted to blend in. Many rooms will not be completely cleared out and cleaned from construction debris. There may be items around that have yet to be put away after being disrupted by construction and 19 months of not being used. Some flooring may still have protective cardboard until all construction and renovation is completed.
- Elevator: When using the elevator, please limit to two unrelated people at a time or to your household. This may mean that it takes more time to make your way upstairs.

ENTERING THE SANCTUARY

- Open: This Sunday, October 24, the doors to the sanctuary will be open at 9:30am. We will be preparing for your arrival until then. If you arrive before 9:30am this week, you could join the intergenerational gathering in Peter Marshall Hall by entering the building on the New York Avenue side.
- Distancing: Please maintain physical distance from those outside your household or social bubble. People who gather in the sanctuary will still have varying comfort levels with proximity and contact with people outside of their household. Being intentional and respectful of others' boundaries will show care and hospitality to one another.
- Bulletins: At each entrance to the sanctuary, you may pick up a bulletin from an usher or a table. The bulletin will not include printed announcements, but all information will be shared in the Weekly email, on slides before worship begins, and on the website.
- Nametags: Reusable nametags have been prepared for every local member. This week, they will be arranged alphabetically by last name on two kiosks in the narthex. The following week, one kiosk will move to the entryway downstairs and you may leave your nametag in the location you prefer. Single-use nametags will also be available in the narthex.

- Seating: Every other pew will be designated for seating. If the number of people requires adjusting this, the ushers will help you sit where you will not be directly behind or in front of someone in the next pew. For now, we ask that you only use the balcony if necessary as the tech team continues to clean up cords and finish setting up over the coming weeks.

ONLINE PRESENCE and PRIVACY CONCERNS

- Online Presence: Websites, social media, and videos are primary avenues through which people first have contact and interaction with churches today, before they ever walk through the door. Sharing worship online, both live and recorded, extends hospitality to visitors and is an act of evangelism and outreach.
- Privacy Concerns: We also care about your privacy concerns. While worship has always been a public gathering, sharing it online makes it even more public. Many of you have shared specific concerns that have helped us to continue thinking intentionally about the way that we both care about privacy and extend hospitality to visitors. We will continue to learn and develop this balance. The following points describe new options, as well as changes to our current practice.
- Livestream: Throughout the pandemic, worship was streamed live on YouTube and Facebook. Starting this Sunday, October 24, we will no longer livestream on Facebook, due to higher concerns about Facebook's facial recognition algorithms, but we will continue to livestream on YouTube.
- Recording: Each week, worship is recorded and posted on our website and YouTube channel. Our Zoom worship service recordings have been "speaker view," so only those who are leading or those who appear during the Peace and Prayers are visible. This will remain true going forward. Worship recordings have been indefinitely available to view through YouTube. Going forward, we will generally keep 4 weeks of worship recordings available publicly. Access to older worship recordings may be requested.
- Camera Angles: The center seating areas in the sanctuary may occasionally be seen with a wide-angle view, often from behind. Close-up views will only be shown of worship leaders, those sharing prayer requests online, and those sharing prayer requests at the stationary microphone in the sanctuary. Determining what the cameras show to online worshippers will be a work in progress.
- Off-Camera Seating: The seating area facing inward on the New York Avenue side will not appear on camera. While the balcony seating will also not appear on camera, we ask that for now you only use the balcony if necessary. There are cables and other items that are still in the midst of being set up and it will be safer and easier on the tech team to remain on the main floor of the sanctuary. Other areas of the sanctuary may be out of camera range as well, but we cannot guarantee those at this point; we will keep you updated.

CHILDREN

- Nursery: The nursery will not be open until at least Sunday, November 7, due to remaining cleaning and setup required after the construction materials have been cleared out. This is an important ministry to families and we will do everything we can to open the nursery as quickly as possible. Paid nursery workers will be vaccinated and masked, and thorough cleaning procedures will be followed between Sundays.
- Sunday School Teachers: We are working toward incorporating vaccination verification into our administrative process for clearing adults to work with children.
- Sanctuary Children's Area: The children's area will still be located toward the back of the sanctuary, but it has moved to the New York Avenue side - the same side as the off-camera seating. This will increase children's privacy and safety by creating a contiguous side of the sanctuary that is off-camera.
- Worship Kits: There will be new worship kits available for children to use in the pews. These will particularly support children and families who are not comfortable using the children's area. The kits will include children's bulletins, index cards for prayer requests, twistable colored pencils, and other items inside a clipboard with storage.
- Time With Children: Children will be invited to come forward and sit in the front pew for the Time With Children. The leader will be masked and remain on the steps. Children will only be visible from behind, if at all. Camera angles for this part of worship will be something we work on over time. This Sunday, we will welcome children who are online to say hello so we can hear and see them, if they and their adult caregivers are comfortable with them doing so. Interaction with the children online is also something that we will figure out over time.
- Worship Play: Until the second floor office suite is finished and clean, we will not be offering worship play during the sermon. So, children will return to their seats after the Time With Children. This is an important ministry to our children and families, and we will do everything we can to start offering worship play as soon as possible.

DURING WORSHIP

- Leaders and Masks: Some worship leaders will keep their masks on due to personal safety comfort levels and some may remove their masks when at a microphone in the chancel area and 6 feet from others. Leaders will do their best to work toward using clear masks, work with the sound system, and enunciate clearly. We know this may be difficult and uncomfortable, and we appreciate your support of those who prefer to remain masked.

- Singing and Music: During hymns, you may sing quietly while keeping your mask on. Soloists and the choir will sing with masks on. The organ is being tuned and serviced this week. It may or may not be ready to use this Sunday, but we look forward to using it again soon.
- Passing the Peace: This will feel different as we keep distance from one another and use alternate signs of peace, respecting the boundaries of others.
- Prayer Requests: You will still be able to share prayer requests with the congregation. There will be a stationary microphone set up in the sanctuary, allowing people worshipping online to see the person sharing. An usher will bring a mic to you if you are unable to come to the stationary mic, but you will not be seen by those on Zoom, only heard. In the sanctuary, we will also be able to hear and see people online sharing prayer requests. Please be patient as we try this together and work through the logistics and technical details to allow us to be connected with one another.
- Offering: The offering will be collected at the exits of the sanctuary, instead of passing the plates. Giving our tithes and offerings will still be part of the worship liturgy, and methods of giving will continue to be shared.
- Communion: We are still working on a plan for serving communion. The Session has voted to not celebrate communion on the first Sunday of November to allow us time to figure this out. We plan to serve communion on the first Sunday of December.

AFTER WORSHIP

- Coffee and Snacks: For now, the Session has decided that no food or beverages will be served at congregational non-worship events in the building. This means there will not be a traditional “coffee” fellowship, but you are still welcome and encouraged to visit with one another.
- Fellowship: If you stay to fellowship with one another, please spread out and use space outside. The pastors are thrilled to see you and visit with you, but they will not stand at the exits to greet worshippers with handshakes and hugs.
- Contact Tracing: If a person in attendance at worship tests positive for Covid-19, they are encouraged to call the church office and their privacy will be respected. [Full contact tracing procedures may be viewed in this document.](#)

FEEDBACK

We want to hear about your worship experience! In order to learn and improve, we need to hear what is working well, what is challenging, your questions, and your ideas, but responding to feedback immediately after worship is very difficult. Please share all of your feedback by emailing feedback@nyapc.org. The most constructive way to voice your concerns is to share thoughtful questions and challenging experiences either by email or later conversation. The worship team debriefs together regularly and all of your feedback will be part of these discussions.