

18 March 2021

Beloved in Christ,

I am happy to announce some in-person, outdoor additions to our Holy Week and Easter schedule that are intended to complement what was published in the E-News last Friday.

On **Saturday, March 27 at Noon**, we will gather outdoors for **the Liturgy of the Palms**. We will pray, hear the story of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem, and bless the palms for our Palm Sunday use. Palms will then be available for pick-up from the end of this liturgy through all of Sunday outside the front doors of the church building.

On **Friday, April 2 at 3 pm**, we will gather creekside for **Veneration of the Cross**. At the historic hour that Jesus drew his last breath, we will gather to hear the crucifixion Gospel, offer the Solemn Collects of Good Friday, and pray together in silence at the cross. Portions of this gathering will be offered in English and Spanish.

On **Sunday, April 4 at 3 pm**, we will gather creekside for an **Easter Creekside Communion**. While this will not be a full celebration of the Holy Eucharist, we will gather, pray, hear the Easter Gospel, and then share communion (bread only, at this time) that has been consecrated earlier. And yes, you can still wear your seersucker and all those wonderful Sisters of Bede fascinators!

[This means of distributing communion is as allowed for in the "safer standards" guidelines for in-person gatherings authorized by the Bishop. Those standards also allow for a maximum attendance at any outside, in-person gathering. If we exceed those numbers, we will add a second afternoon offering at another time. Planning is also underway to offer this Easter Creekside Communion either in Spanish or in a bilingual fashion later that afternoon as well.]

In addition to these three additional in-person opportunities which are intended to complement the online Holy Week offerings, **we also plan to offer three in-person, indoor pilgrimage opportunities** whereby folks may sign up individually or with a family member or friend to come to the church building and pray in the Nave for fifteen-minute "pilgrimages". We are working to schedule these in blocks of time on that Tuesday afternoon, that Thursday morning, and around midday on Holy Saturday.

It has been a blessing to have "stayed together" in worship on Zoom (or on YouTube) for so long now and I hope that experience continues to be a blessing to you as it is currently the only worship "space" we have that allows for singing and for "fellowship" before and after worship. I do hope that you will avail yourself of those online offerings during Holy Week and consider adding in some of these outdoor, in-person opportunities as you feel comfortable.



As with any in-person gatherings allowed for in the Diocese of Atlanta, masking and social-distancing are still required. More details will be available about all of these offerings along with information about how to register to attend (registration will be required) in next Friday's (3/26) E-News.

In addition to these Holy Week in-person offerings, **during the Easter season we plan to begin regular outdoor, in-person creekside worship offerings on Sunday afternoons** – alternating weeks in English, Spanish, and occasional bilingual offerings as well! Look for more information about that to be forthcoming.

Also, in accordance with the new additional option provided to parishes last week by the Bishop and the Diocesan COVID-19 Task Force, we plan to spend the Easter season preparing to begin offering limited indoor, in-person worship opportunities by around Pentecost. There will be lots of planning and consideration to make this possible, but our Gathering Going Forward Group will be working hard to implement the recommendations and standards that best suit St. Bede's for where we may find ourselves at that point in this ongoing pandemic journey.

As with so many things during this pandemic season, plans may be subject to change if public health data suggests the need for additional restrictions. Also, all outdoor opportunities are subject to weather conditions – but we feel that Spring maximizes our opportunities for comfortable outdoor gatherings. We also feel that planning for and regularizing these opportunities will allow for them to take place as regularly as possible – only changing them if last-minute weather conditions would suggest them to be unsafe.

While I know that all of this still may not be the fullest of what any of us may have hoped for our Holy Week, Easter, or Easter season 2021 observances and celebrations, I hope that you will find for you that which will help you approach God and one another more fully this year. I also hope that all of this is, for us as a community, the next significant steps in beginning to gather again as a community in the way that we would hope for and the way in which our offerings of worship may be most full and pleasing to God.

Look for more information Next Friday, March 26, in E-News about how to register for the in-person offerings.

Hang in there folks – we are moving forward. We live in hope and are encouraged by what appears on the horizon. Stay safe. Wear your masks. Wash your hands. Get your vaccinations (as they are available to you). Love God and love one another – and glorify God in the doing of all of this.

With love and hope,



Chad

