

Church of the Advent

Guidelines for Returning to Worship

Beginning Sunday June 14th and continuing until further notice:

The decision to resume public worship must be made separately by each congregation, with the Clergy and Church Wardens working together. Before resuming public worship, a congregation must develop a detailed plan for public worship and must follow this plan each week. This plan must respect and incorporate any/all requirements of state and local leaders of government.

Congregations are free to worship publicly as soon as Sunday, May 17, 2020 but may make the decision to wait longer until they are confident that they can be safe in worshipping publicly.

Congregations must abide by all aspects of our Governor's current and future Executive Orders, including any limits placed on Mass Gatherings.

Congregational decisions and plans must be communicated to its members effectively, in advance of public worship, so that members are more able to support and follow these plans.

Congregations must encourage all high risk individuals to stay home rather than risk the chance of infection. Remember, many of our Clergy are themselves high-risk individuals, and must be afforded appropriate consideration and support in a congregation's plans for a return to public worship.

Coffee hour or other forms for receptions before or after worship are not allowed at this time.

Clergy will not greet people at the door, and participants will be reminded to space themselves out as they depart at the end of the liturgy. Again, the six (6)-foot distance will be maintained as the congregation exits. Clergy will not touch worshipers as they leave.

In the event of inclement weather, services will be canceled. Parishioners will be notified by email of cancelation prior to service.

Cleaning

Before each gathering of public worship, all high touch surfaces must be thoroughly and properly cleaned. For outdoor worship, chairs being carried outside for use by the congregation will need to be cleaned before use. Altar Guild members, or others setting up for worship, must be particularly mindful of this requirement.

Seating

Worshippers are encouraged to bring their own seating such as lawn chairs or blankets and will be required to maintain a safe physical distance of six (6) feet between family units.

Higher risk worshippers may also choose to stay in their cars parked along Hassell Street.

Worship

All Sunday services will be held outdoors on the lawn on Hassell Street. Service time will be 11:00am.

All in attendance over the age of two (2) including worshippers and leaders of worship will be required to wear a facemask or covering. Masks will be available for those who do not arrive with their own.

At this time, there must be no congregational or choral singing in public worship. This decision will be regularly reviewed. Soloists may sing publicly if they practice physical distancing and wear a face covering. Alternatively, congregations may choose to include only instrumental music during public worship.

Assigned Readers and Intercessors will remain at their seats while reading. Masks or face coverings should stay on while reading.

A table will be set up with printed bulletins, offering plate, hand sanitizer, and facemasks. Printed bulletins will be provided, but worshippers may want to bring their own Book of Common Prayer and Bible to follow along.

Ushers will not collect the offering during the offertory. You may leave your offerings in the offering plate before or after the service.

Ushers will have the responsibility of making sure people are properly distanced.

Holy Eucharist

Not all services will be a Holy Eucharist. Some services will be an Ante-Communion. Others will be a Morning Prayer.

When there is communion, it will be a Spiritual Communion rather than a Physical Communion.

Protocols for Worship Inside the Nave

Protocols may change to reflect changes in the Government and Diocesan restrictions.

Sunday services will exceed the current maximum limits set by the North Carolina Department of Health & Human Services and the Diocese of East Carolina for groups meeting in indoor spaces. At the present, the maximum number is ten (10) people.

Evening Prayer may be a small enough group to meet indoors but must be prepared to move outdoors should the number exceed the maximum limit.

Pews will be marked off to assure appropriate physical distancing.

GUIDANCE FOR WORSHIPERS

Before coming to any worship service, members of the household planning to attend should check their temperatures (should be less than 100° F) and determine whether anyone has a dry cough or has lost a sense of smell.

If anyone has any of these symptoms, has been exposed to someone with coronavirus or has tested positive for coronavirus, the household member should remain at home.

Persons who are at higher risk for coronavirus (children, persons age 65 or older, those who are asthmatic, diabetic or have a compromised immune system) should assess the degree of risk that is acceptable for them and their household.

Please wash your hands before you leave home.

Please bring a clean facemask for each member of the household except for children less than two (2) years old. Wear the facemask throughout the service and when you are near others. A facemask will be provided for those that forget or do not have a facemask.

Maintain a distance of at least six (6) feet from other persons at all times.

Please do not shake hands, hug or otherwise touch people who are not members of your household, including during the Peace.

Please follow the church's protocols for entering and exiting the building.

Please go straight to your seats at the beginning of the service and leave the building promptly after the service.

Please place your bulletin in the receptacle designated by the church at the end of the service or take it home with you to recycle.