

St. Christopher's Episcopal Church
Fr. Steve Karcher

September 24, 2020

Greetings All,

As we continue to re-gather, we want to be both transparent and inviting. The Bishops have generated updated guidelines, summarized below with the key points, relevant to us. *The guidelines below allow us to slightly increase our Live Sunday Worship*, and will govern our steps forward.

Please remember that, because I may or will officiate at one or more services on Sunday, and am exposed to many people, I will continue keeping office hours on Tuesday and Thursday. I'm also available for phone conferences Monday-Thursday, and, as needed, for emergencies.

WORSHIP

- Communion wafers will continue to be distributed at the usual time in the Live Service, by the Priest or Deacon, by hand, with both the clergy and worshippers masked.
- No wine will be distributed, through any means. I will continue to consecrate and consume a small amount of wine at the altar.
- Because I have no one with me at the altar, and social distancing is 10' or more, I will not be masked during the service, including the prayer of consecration. I will also not be masked when I read the Gospel, offer the sermon, or make announcements, because I will keep a social distance of at least 10 feet. *But* I will wear a mask during the distribution of the Eucharist.
- Lay leaders, and readers, will be masked unless a minimum distancing of 10' is maintained from the nearest person.
- For **Indoor Worship** we can now accommodate up to **50 people**. In our Nave, we would expand the use of the North and South "wings". Crucial factors include maintaining physical distancing of 6' or more between individuals/households. I'd prefer 10', which means one family per pew, with a smaller group of 1-2 persons on the other side.

- Please do **not gather in the Narthex**, after Services,
- There are no limits on attendance at an **Outdoor Worship** as long as everyone is masked and physical distancing of 6' feet between individuals/ households is maintained.
- We will have no Drive-In or Drive-By Worship, But, an outdoor service, in lawn chairs outside of cars in our parking lot, socially distant during Communion especially, could work.
- "Spiritual Communion", i.e., at home following the Consecration, in an on-line worship service, is discouraged because it emphasizes the individual ("My Jesus, *I cannot at this time receive*"), rather than Community ("Our Father"). Likewise, "Virtual Eucharist", when the laity at home imagine that their bread and wine at home are "consecrated virtually".
- Until further notice, our bishops will not be physically present for indoor worship services. In connection with any live visitation, the bishop will schedule time with clergy and vestries/bishop's committees, mostly using virtual technology.
- Confirmations may be considered on a case by case basis, likely to occur in an outdoor worship service, taking into consideration physical distancing and would involve only the confirmand/s and one presenter/ sponsor each. Everyone would be masked and distanced. The bishops hope for more regular confirmations, beginning in Advent.
- Funerals, inside the Nave will be bound by the Service guidelines. The family should supply a guest list in case contact tracing is needed. For a graveside, or other outside location, physical distancing of 6' is required between individuals/ households. In every case, masking and distancing are key.

- Clergy home visits should be brief and outside, if possible and if indoor, limited to less than 10 minutes. Masking and physical distancing are key. Home Communion, by the Clergy or a *specifically trained* LEV are likewise governed. No Communion elements, e.g., wafers, will be distributed in baggies or in envelopes; they are not to be mailed to the home or dropped off in the mailbox or front porch. No wine is to be distributed.
- Both indoor congregational **singing** and **music**, are strongly discouraged, unless the singers are distanced more than 12 feet (unless of the same household.) A singer/ soloist should be masked unless an exceptionally long distance (greater than 15 feet) is kept. Factors such as size of the space, time in the space, ventilation and air flow are all relevant.
- With more singing shorter worship services are better (around 30 minutes). It is that the attention span of an on-line worshipper is less than with an in-person worshipper.

Thank you all for your faithful support of St. Christopher's, as we walk together through these crazy Virus days!

In Peace, with every Blessing,

-Fr. Steve