

About Our Community Covenant

*For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven.
-Ecclesiastes 3:1*

This time of pandemic is like no other season in our lifetimes. We are being called to act in unfamiliar ways, distancing ourselves from others, staying home a good part of the time, wearing protective masks when we are in public places, and disclosing when we have been exposed to the virus. At first these new behaviors may seem to go against our sense of “freedom;” yet, upon deeper reflection, they reflect the core values and beliefs of our Christian faith.

The Covenant we make at our baptism expresses what it means to follow Christ and what it means to be a Christian. In the midst of these baptismal promises, we commit to live faithfully both inside and outside the church walls, seeking to serve all persons in Christian love:

Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself?
I will, with God’s help. (Book of Common Prayer, p. 305)

This will be a season that requires establishing and committing ourselves to a *new* covenant, as we gather again in person. It is critical that clergy, parish leaders and community members all commit to a covenant that will demonstrate Christian love and care and provide for the health and safety of every person.

For us as Christians, washing our hands and wearing masks become acts of care and devotion. Our masks provide some protection to the wearer, but much protection to others if we are unknowing asymptomatic carriers of the virus. We live in community, and Jesus commands love for our neighbor, sometimes above ourselves. (“In humility value others above yourselves.” -*Philippians 2:3*)

We realize our gathering will necessarily look different than it did before this season of pandemic, as a natural consequence of our call, at this time, to look out for one another, doing whatever we can to protect every person present as well as everyone with whom they will have contact. There is no shame when we act from selfless love. We will do this out of the abundance of our Christian love and service as we commit ourselves to this community covenant.

(Adapted from A Guide for Reflection and Planning, the Office of the Bishop)

Please read and sign this and bring it to worship with you on Sunday

A Community Covenant

In response to our core Christian values of love for God and neighbor (Matt. 22:39), and heeding the words of St. Paul when he said, “Love does no harm to a neighbor” (Rom. 13:10), we covenant in community to take these selfless actions:

- We will wash our hands carefully and fully.
- We will enter our spaces with care and intention.
- We will keep the recommended safe distance from others: at least 6 feet, including during the exchange of the Peace, and will communicate the Lord’s Peace by physical sign (wave, bow, peace sign, etc.) rather than by voice or touch.
- We will wear masks, properly.
- We will refrain from singing, as this spreads the virus to a much greater extent.
- If we test positive, we will not enter upon the church property for any reason and will disclose our test result to our clergy or parish leader so the church can provide assistance with quarantine and medical attention, and take steps for the safety of the community.
- If a member of our household or family tests positive, or if we believe that we have been exposed to the virus, we will not enter upon the church property for any reason for at least 14 days.
- We will assist with compassionate contact tracing.
- We understand that restrooms will be closed except in case of emergency. If we must use the restroom, we will use the handicapped restroom in the parish hall only, and clean the room with sanitized wipes when we are finished.
- In order to provide the safest environment for fellow worshipers, especially those who may be most vulnerable, we will cooperate with the Vestry, Worship Safety Team, and other leaders who are charged with implementing the guidelines developed by the Vestry in consultation with our Diocese and informed by our Governor and Health Department.

(print name)

(signature)

(date)