

# Guidelines for Indoor Worship

We have enjoyed the ability to have weekly outdoor services over the last few weeks. It has been wonderful to be able to connect with our church community in person. Unfortunately, winter is moving in on us and outdoor services are no longer an option.

After much prayerful consideration, we have decided to have an indoor service on the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of every month. Of course, if things change due to the increase/decrease of COVID directives from the Diocese and/or Governor, we will adapt accordingly. We have followed all protocol directives to make the service in the church as safe as possible for everyone. That being said, it is important to know that indoor worship increases the risk factor significantly compared to being outside. So we ask that you make choices that you feel support your own personal situation by keeping your personal health and well-being in mind, while at the same time realizing that you yourself may be the "asymptomatic carrier" who might unknowingly infect others in our parish family. Each of our decisions affects us all.

Public health professionals and our Bishop's Office still remind those who are over the age of 65 or who have underlying medical issues that online worship is still the safest way to worship. Therefore, Christ Church will continue to provide an online worship option, livestreaming to our Christ Church Facebook Page when we have in-person worship, and posting the recorded service to our Vimeo Channel each and every Sunday.

Here are the protocols for in-service worship. Many of them are the same as for our outdoor service.

- Reservations must be made on the reservation form online. If you are unable to do that you can call Fr. Mark and he will add you to the list.

- The only entrance to the church will be the far west door of the chapel. Handicap access is available via the front ramp, if needed; please request it when making a reservation.

- Everyone must wear a mask at all times while on church property.

- Please bring your own prayer book. If you do not have a prayer book you can check one out and keep it until the COVID protocols are no

longer needed. All of the hymnals, prayer books, and bibles have been removed from the pews.

-We continue to ask that you not speak aloud the responses, the Creed, or the Lord's Prayer; say these in your hearts.

-Your temperature will be taken as soon as you enter the chapel.

-Hand sanitizers are available throughout the church.

-8' physical distancing is marked on the floor and should be followed at all times.

-At check-in you will have a seat assignment. As we did with outdoors worship, an offering box will be available at the check-in table.

-An usher will usher you to your seat. The church is taped off for physical distancing.

-The communion "chalices" (little plastic "chalices" with bread and wine) are available as you enter the nave.

-Please remain in your seat at all times. The handicap bathroom in the Parish Hall is available for emergencies.

-After the service, the ushers will dismiss you following physical distancing protocol, beginning from the front. Please stay seated until you are dismissed. We will exit out of the Parish Hall door.

A short video explaining these steps is available via the Belltower.

We understand that people are "all over the board" regarding their perceptions of how best to navigate our activities during this Pandemic. Some of you have told us that you will not feel safe returning to in-person worship until there is a reliable vaccine that a large majority of Americans have received. Others feel that the risk to themselves and to others by worshipping in-person is worth taking, and are frustrated at the slow pace of "returning to normal" and with the precautions that are put in place.

We are *all* experiencing Pandemic Fatigue.

We have put our minds, hearts, and prayers into making what we feel are loving and reasoned decisions for our Christ Church family which reflect the best current scientific and medical knowledge, while at the same time

understanding how important in-person worship is to us all. We are well aware that many other churches have been worshipping indoors and in-person for months (some even without masks or distancing), while other churches have yet to meet in-person, whether indoors or outdoors, since March, and do not plan to do so for the foreseeable future. Our decisions have not been made on the basis of what this or that other church is doing, but rather on the basis of what we believe – after much study, deliberation, diocesan input, and prayer – is best for all of Christ Church. We realize that gathering indoors presents an elevated risk which cannot be eliminated; but it can be managed. We believe that the procedures outlined here provide the opportunity to worship in-person (albeit not every week), while minimizing overall risks.

While you may not agree with these decisions, we hope that you trust us enough to know that they have been made with much thought, deliberation, prayer, and love.

Yours in Christ's love and service,

Members of your Vestry