

Christ Church

An Episcopal Parish in the Diocese of East Carolina

Re-engaging in Life Together at Christ Church, New Bern

May 28, 2020

The world has changed greatly since we last met to worship face-to-face on March 8, 2020. A little over a month ago, I wrote and spoke to our parish family about what it might look like and how we would begin to re-engage in life together. You can find that message here (<https://christchurchnewbern.com/april-23rd-update-from-the-rector/>). If you don't have time to read the whole thing, the bottom line is that we will be slow, deliberate, and discerning as we move forward.

I am grateful for a small group who has helped craft and review these plans. That task force was Jean Reichenbach, Carl Huddle, Janet Peregoy, Ellie Roberts, and Rob Jutras. I am grateful for the many others who offered their voice and wisdom along the way, also.

We will operate with three guiding principles as we move forward:

- “Am I my brother’s (or sister’s) keeper?” (Genesis 4:9)
- The two great commandments to love God and love our neighbor (Matthew 22:37-40)
- What would love do? A question posed by Bishop Curry to the whole church¹

The Rt. Rev. Rob Skirving, Bishop of the Diocese of East Carolina, has issued guidelines for parishes². While there is some latitude and freedom for local decisions, there are areas that are non-negotiable. Those areas include:

- All worship leaders (both clergy and lay) must wear a mask or face covering during worship
- Congregational singing is not allowed at this time. A soloist may be part of public worship.
- Modifications must be made to prevent unnecessary physical contact.
- Coffee hour or other forms for receptions before or after worship are not allowed at this time.

1

<https://episcopalchurch.org/posts/publicaffairs/presiding-bishop-michael-currys-word-church-what-would-love-do>

2

https://s3.amazonaws.com/dfc_attachments/public/documents/3277449/Pastoral_Letter_Next_Steps.pdf

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Those with compromised health, particularly immuno-related concerns, should carefully consider the risks and benefits of being in public gatherings, both indoor and outdoor. While we will always be excited to see you, we also want you and everyone else to make healthy choices. If you are not feeling well on the day of a liturgy, or you have come in contact with someone who has contracted COVID-19, please stay home. For those who choose or need to stay home, our 11:00am service will be shown online.

We also recognize that not everyone will be comfortable re-engaging at this time, and we support you and your decision. That one of the big reasons we will continue to livestream services.

Beginning June 7th and continuing through July 5th

All Sunday services will be held on the lawn near the outdoor chapel. Service times will be 8:00am, 11:00am, and 5:00pm. The 11:00am service will be livestreamed to both Facebook and YouTube.

In order to gather safely, even outdoors, we need to limit the number of people who can attend any one service. Parishioners (and others) will need to go to SignUpGenius to pick which service they will attend. The link will be posted on the front of our website (www.christchurchnewbern.com). Those without access to the internet or comfort with SignUpGenius can contact Ellie Roberts, Director of Church Life, to sign up. She can be reached at 252.474.6707 or ellieroberts@christchurchnewbern.com.

Worshippers are encouraged to bring their own seating (lawn chair, blanket, etc), and will be required to maintain a safe physical distance of 6 feet between household units. Worshippers may also choose to stay in their cars parked along Middle or Pollock Streets.

Worshippers will enter from either the Middle Street entrance closest to the Parish House (not by the chapel) or from the Pollock Street gates. Because contact tracing is important in the fight against this pandemic, we ask attendees to check in with an usher or greeter who will be at each entrance so we know who is here.

All in attendance over the age of 2 (worshippers and leaders of worship) will be required to wear a face mask or covering.³ Masks will be available at the entrances for those who do not arrive with their own.

³ Scientific studies continue to show that wearing a mask reduces the possibilities of transmitting the disease or catching it from someone else. This is another way the Church can be a model for the rest of our community.

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Printed bulletins will be provided and will also be emailed prior to Sunday and available on the Christ Church Website for printing at home or for downloading to a personal electronic device. Worshippers are encouraged to bring their own Book of Common Prayer and Bible or a phone/tablet to follow along.

Readers assigned will not vest, but will come forward to read at the appropriate point in the liturgy. Masks or face coverings should stay on while reading.

In the event of inclement weather, the outdoor services will not be held. Any readers assigned for the 11:00 service may convene in the Nave with the clergy and music leaders to livestream the service.

The offering will be collected in secure boxes near the entrances. Boxes will be available near the end of each service.

We will explore and develop a safe protocol for distribution of Communion while maintaining appropriate physical distance. Until that time, we will continue with Morning Prayer or Ante-Communion/Liturgy of the Word.

Restroom Usage

Restrooms will be limited to those in the Parish House. Unless you are in need of or giving assistance, we ask that only one person at a time be in there. Someone will be stationed at the Reception Desk to monitor and inform people coming in to use the restroom if it is currently occupied.

Guidance for Worshippers⁴

- The evening before the worship service, each member of the household planning to attend in-person worship should check their temperature (should be less than 100° F) and determine whether anyone has a dry cough or has lost their 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 members should remain at home and worship online.
- 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.

⁴ Many thanks to the Diocese of West Tennessee for this list.
<https://episwtn.org/faith-community-guidelines-for-resumption-of-in-person-worship/>

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- Please bring a clean face mask for each member of the household except for children less than 2 years old. Wear the face mask throughout the service and when you are near others.
- Please bring hand sanitizer and apply it before entering the worship space.
- Maintain a distance of at least 6 feet from other persons at all times.
- Please do not shake hands or otherwise touch people who are not members of your household, including during the Peace.
- There will be no congregational singing until health experts advise otherwise.
- Please follow the church's protocols for entering and exiting the building if you need to use the restroom.
- Please go straight to your seats at the beginning of the service and depart the worship space promptly after the service.
- Please place your bulletin in the place designated by the church at the end of the service or take it home with you to recycle.

The bottom line is that we want our space and our community to be as safe as possible to as many people as possible. We are going to do everything in our power to make that happen.

Questions? Comments? Please feel free to reach out to me or Jean Reichenbach, Senior Warden (seniorwarden@christchurchnewbern.com or 252.259.7628).

God is continuing to do new things in our lives and in our world! We look forward to that journey!

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul" with a small cross symbol at the end.

The Rev. Paul Canady

Rector

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