

August 5, 2020

Dear Parish:

Thank you for responding to the recent questionnaire regarding our services and activities during the pandemic. This was very helpful to the Vestry as we continue to deliberate how to move forward during this period. Our ultimate aim continues to be to tend to the needs of our community while taking every action to ensure everyone's safety from the virus.

What we learned from your responses:

### **Appreciations:**

- 1) There is enormous appreciation for the services that are being provided via Zoom.
  - a. Sunday services and coffee hour are welcomed.
  - b. The "Hymn of the Day" is a hit.
  - c. Compline and Gospel Based Discipleship, while having small attendance, are an important link to the community for those that are involved.
- 2) E-mail, the newsletter, cards and general outreach are even more important to everyone. The efforts of the Welcoming Committee to send cards are much appreciated. The refreshed newsletter developed by the Newsletter Team is wonderful.

### **Longings:**

- 1) Everyone is longing for a return to in person worship. Some think we are being too cautious and should find a way to offer worship in small gatherings.
- 2) Christian Formation: People miss the opportunity to gather in Adult Ed. The Hymn of the Day "helps" but there is a yearning for more.
- 3) Social connection: There is a strong desire for more social connection - in person, for sure, but virtually also.
- 4) Losing our friends: While many of the parish are joining the on line services, they do not work for all. We miss these people.

### **Directions**

At our last Vestry meeting, the Vestry gave serious consideration to these responses. Our priority continues to be to tend to the needs of our parish while taking appropriate cautions against COVID-19. Underlying our response are the guidelines from the Diocese regarding COVID-19. The approaches we agreed on are below:

### **Services**

For the foreseeable future, we will continue to offer on-line services only. The exception would be (according to the ECMN guidelines) small gatherings for memorial services or

other special services. This was, frankly, a hard decision for the Vestry. We all long to meet together. But the concerns about the risks of accidental COVID-19 transmission outweighed this longing. We recognize that many of us (including our staff) fall into one of the high risk categories and we do not want to unwittingly jeopardize anyone's risk of getting COVID-19.

We are actively looking into adding wi-fi capability into the sanctuary so that we will be able to live stream services. This will have the added benefit of being able to offer livestream as an option after we return to in-person worship. We'll provide more updates as plans for this are finalized.

We plan to re-start Compline once the days have shortened and days get cooler. Several mentioned that during the summer it was just too tempting to be outside.

### **Christian Formation**

Father Tom is going to explore options to offer Adult Ed on-line as we move into the fall. The Hymn of the Day will continue.

### **Gathering**

We'll be asking John Hoffacker to explore ways to bring our community together for some type of musical event while we all socially distance in cars. I am sure this will get his creative juices going – so watch for more details.

Please know that you are more than welcome to use our wonderful garden space. Carole Leonard and Geri Alberg have continued to tend it. Consider gathering there with a few friends (socially distanced of course) for a lunch while the weather is mild.

### **Where you can help**

Supper Club: While we cannot meet in person, we could do a virtual supper club. We need someone to step forward to help organize this. Please let Fr. Tom or me know if you are interested.

Connecting with members: Our clergy and the Welcoming Committee have an active outreach program. But, if you are missing faces, please take a moment to call them and say hello.

Other thoughts on connections? Please let Father Tom or me know.

Finally, thank you for your support of our community during this period. It is wonderful to see your faces on Zoom on Sundays and I do look forward to when we can meet in person.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Boe  
Rector's Warden