

May 28, 2020

Dear faithful parishioners,

This letter is about where we are in reopening the church building and where we are going. It's also about how you can help.

There are many factors that will go into reopening the church building for services. In our efforts to keep communication open, and keep you informed as we weigh these various factors, I have inadvertently created a certain amount of confusion. Are there 3 services? 1? Communion: Yes? No? Masks? Coffee hour? The information keeps changing. I apologize.

The bishop has asked that churches continue to live stream services, and not reopen for in-person worship in June. The numbers of infected in Maine are rising and summer people may bring new challenges. The COVID-19 situation is evolving, and our plans need to evolve too. Everything is in flux—including reopening churches safely. Here's what we know right now: keeping physical distancing, the church can only host a very small number of people at one time, much less than we thought, and seats would have to be by reservation, in advance.

We are keeping one directive front and center: **The Church is called to slow the spread of COVID-19 and care for our most vulnerable parishioners.**

No matter how much we may want things to get “back to normal,” it's not going to happen for months. We will reopen to a “new normal.” Things will not be as they were, but we will continue to be faithful. We will make decisions that reflect our goal: to keep us all as healthy as possible while meeting that directive. Holding multiple services on Sunday morning creates logistical problems regarding cleaning between services, so we are rethinking that option. Only the church and one restroom would be able to be open: the rest of the building will be closed. There will be no coffee hour for a while.

This is where you come in: it would help the task force and vestry if we could gather more information about what you are thinking. I know that some of you are ready to return now. I know that many others are not, yet. So please tell us what you think. Use this [link](#) to take a short poll about your thoughts on reopening. I want to be clear that this is not a voting process: but it helps with our discernment.

For our part: we will try to communicate with you without sending mixed signals. As of right now: nothing has been decided—not even when we will reopen.

As we gather information, reflect, and make decisions, please continue to join us in one or all of the many opportunities to worship online—services are offered 7 days a week. Come to virtual coffee hour to keep in touch with our church family. Meetings and classes are still occurring via Facebook and Zoom. Join us! Sunday school is still meeting—learn with us!

Soon enough we will meet face to face—but at least 6 feet apart.

God bless you and keep you,

Lisa+