

St. Christopher by-the-River
AN EPISCOPAL PARISH IN THE DIOCESE OF OHIO

June 24, 2020

Dear Friends,

I am very happy to share with you that the Diocese has approved the detailed plan for returning to in-person worship that the Vestry and I submitted for their review. Our first Sunday back inside the Church will be on Sunday, July 5th. **For the time being, we will have one Sunday worship service of Morning Prayer at 9:00 a.m.** Many of you are not ready or able to return to in-building worship – and may not return until a proven vaccine is available. I am trusting each of you to make the decision that is best for you. The last thing that I would want would be for any of you to be infected with this terrible virus! We will continue to record and post Sunday worship services to our YouTube Channel.

In preparation for regathering, the Church has been cleaned and sanitized by Lucy and Luis. All areas of the building that are available for use during Sunday morning worship will also be cleaned and sanitized by them following the service. As you continue to read this letter, you will see that we have made many changes in a best effort to keep all of us safe as we return to worshipping together in our building.

When you come to Church, please wear a mask and bring your own Prayer Book with you. If you need a mask or a Prayer Book, we will provide one for you but ask that you take them home and bring them back with you each time you come to worship. You will also see a touch-free hand sanitizing station to your right in the Narthex. Please use it both entering and leaving the Church. We are doing everything we can to make worshipping in our building as safe for you as possible.



We will ask you to use the side aisles to reach your pew. (Households may share a pew. Otherwise, please enjoy having an entire pew to yourself!) The Alms Basin (collection plate) will be on a table at the back of the center aisle. Please place your offerings there as you enter the Sanctuary – we will not be passing it during the service. We will still be recording the service for posting to our YouTube channel so you will see John Irwin’s tripod and video camera set up at the front of the center aisle.



We have taped off alternating pews so that we can all keep a minimum six-foot safe space throughout our worship service. (You will see laminated signs saying “You are welcome to sit here” in pews that are available for use.) Because this reduces the number of us who can safely be in the sanctuary at the same time, you will need to Sign-Up for each Sunday that you intend to come to church. Sign-Up will be through the Flock Notes email that you receive each week. When you sign up and submit your name/s you will also be affirming that the parish will be “held harmless” should you become sick and that you will “social distance” and wear a mask throughout your time at Church.

Some aspects of our worship will be different. The Altar Party will enter and exit from the front of the Sanctuary in order to keep the required six-foot minimum space. We will not be singing any hymns but Yuri's husband, John McElliott, will have recorded a hymn for us in advance of the service. At the end of our worship, please take care to keep that six-foot safe space between you and exit by pew from back to front. The universal access Men's Room and Ladies' Room will be available and will provide hand-sanitizer and paper towels for your use. Most of the Guild Room and other rooms have been taped "off limits" in order to simplify our sanitation routine. Finally, although we will not have Coffee Hour for the foreseeable future, you may enjoy a time of fellowship on the front lawn, provided that you continue to wear your mask and keep a safe space between you.

If someone on staff or at worship contracts covid-19, the Wardens, Vestry, staff, and parish will be informed (without naming the individual for privacy/pastoral purposes) (along with the Department of Health, who will be given the individual's name) and services will be suspended for a minimum of 14 days. During that time, people who have been in contact with the infected person will be asked to self-quarantine and the building will be professionally disinfected.



I believe that we have done everything within our power to maximize our health. Please join us and do your part as well. I look forward to seeing you soon

God's Peace be with you all,
Ann+



PARADE INFO!



As you probably know, every year there is a big parade through the Village center on the 4th of July with many people lining the streets. Due to the concern over the very contagious virus, we are encouraging residents to stay at home and this year, and, with a new special route throughout the village, we will bring the parade to the people. Beginning July 1st, if you live in Gates Mills, please go to www.gatesmillsvillage.com for information to see if it is coming by your house. The church will still be allowed to have a limited number of observers who will be expected to have masks, their own chairs and practice proper spacing. So, if you are not on the route, consider coming. There will be no parking on River, Old Mill or Epping but one can park on the polo field on Epping and take the short walk to the church. *Weather permitting, the parade will begin at 11:00 and should reach the church sometime between 11:30 and 12:15.*

The parade is sponsored by The Gates Mills Improvement Society. In addition to the parade, there is a best home/yard/fence/mail box contest with multiple prizes. (The website contains details). St Christopher's has signed up as a contestant. I am confident that we will be very much in the running for a prize, thanks to the Klinginsmith family and especially artist extraordinaire Anna Klinginsmith, who is making a beautiful banner. Again, weather permitting, it will be up on the afternoon of July 3rd and on the 4th. So drive by and have a look. As always, we wish everyone a great holiday as we celebrate the founding of our nation and God's presence in our beautiful community.



4th OF JULY
I★LOVE★A★PARADE