



CHURCH OF
ST. LUKE &
ST. MATTHEW

August 28, 2020

Dear friends in Christ

Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers. Romans 12

Grace and peace to you from our Lord Jesus Christ.

The summer is drawing to a close and our liturgical focus shifts to Fall and later in November to Advent. In this very unique year of challenges there is a lot happening for us as a parish, and for the wider world. The pandemic, the economic fallout, the continued shooting of young black and brown people, protests and walkouts, and a bitter few weeks as we head toward November 3. And we have two major construction projects underway. May the Lord have mercy on us and guide us!

In-person services – When can they resume?

As you are aware the resumption of in-person worship is no simple matter. Before summer the vestry agreed that we would not resume in-person services for Morning Prayer until at least September and the online offering would continue. Bishop Provenzano formed a task force charged with developing guidelines for in-person worship. He adopted a four-phase plan. We are currently in Phase B, which permits in-person worship for Morning Prayer.

Phase C will permit in-person worship of the Holy Eucharist. It was my intention to continue the online MP service until such time as the Bishop permits Phase C to be implemented, hoping that we could resume in-person worship on September 20, the Feast of St Matthew. However, at a meeting last Thursday he indicated to the clergy that the task force was waiting to see the outcome of school reopenings and whether any spike in infections occurs, before recommending Phase C begin, which could be late September or October, or later.

Phase C will have stringent health and liturgical restrictions that will be imposed by the parish and Diocese for any resumption of in-person services. They are max 25 people per service, no hymn singing, no choirs, no fans or AC, face masks for all, 6-10 ft separation, no coffee hour, contact tracing recording, and detailed bathroom cleans between persons. The largest impact is 25 person max. per service as this would mean 3 – 4 services per Sunday to accommodate our parish.

So, I do intend to commence in-person worship for Eucharist once the Bishop authorizes Phase C to begin. We will require registration for the service so you don't turn up and cannot get in. It will also indicate to me how many services will be required. The services will be shortened to approx. 30 mins. Our online service of Morning Prayer will continue indefinitely. So you may choose to attend in person once a month and worship online for the remaining Sundays.

Once we have a green light for Phase C we will update you on when we will resume.

Continuation of online services and Coffee Hour

Online service of morning prayer, which has been well received will continue each week via YouTube. Access via our website www.stlukeandstmatthew.org or through our YouTube channel Church of St Luke and St Matthew.

Online coffee hour will continue every two weeks. The first one in September will be the 13th at 11am. Access is via our Zoom service (www.zoom.com) using access code 5331484605 (no password) or via phone 646-558-8656 and enter access code 5331484605.

Survey of Worship and Teaching Interests for the Fall

To gauge interest in other services and teaching options we will be sending out a survey requesting your feedback on possibilities. The survey will be emailed, on the website and also mailed to those that receive the newsletter by mail. The initial options will be:

- Live stream of the in-person service of Holy Eucharist via YouTube live
- Online Morning Prayer via YouTube
- Online Wednesday Noonday Prayer
- In-person Wednesday midday Holy Eucharist
- Online Wednesday Evening Prayer
- Online Compline, which is a late evening service
- Online Teaching series or bible study
- Online book club – “How to be an Antiracist” is a Diocesan wide read this fall
- Online concerts by our choir or by other artists
- Online social justice outreach to young adults

Weekly e-newsletter

Our weekly e-newsletter will continue to be emailed out each Friday to those of you who subscribed via the website. Many people get a hard copy mailed so if you need it mailed please call the office and you will be put on the mailing list.

I pray for you each day that you may be sustained by your faith and comforted by your family and friends during this difficult time. Please let us know if you need any pastoral support by calling the office.

Peace and blessings
Fr Andrew Durbidge



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