

Message from Robin+

We are ready to regather! It will be so good to see you all on Sunday and it will be very difficult for me not to hug you and stand close and engage in conversations to catch up. I imagine this will also be difficult for you. We will need to be very diligent about following the guidelines so that we can continue to gather each week, and in order to ensure the safety of everyone. I encourage you to carefully read through the guidelines, found elsewhere in this week's eNews. With regathering in mind, the Collect assigned for the week seems so appropriate -

*Let your continual mercy, O Lord, cleanse and defend your Church; and, because it cannot continue in safety without your help, protect and govern it always by your goodness; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.*

While our church must be physically cleansed each week to defend it from the COVID virus, the Church is always in need of God's mercy to cleanse us as well. Mercy to cleanse us from our self-focus, careless thoughts and deeds, things done and left undone, all of which distort God's love and mercy.

As we move through these first weeks of regathering, we know that we will be relying on God's help and protection. For worship to happen we must also rely on one another. We will be praying Morning Prayer during August, though in a slightly modified form. Our goal is to have brief services so that we are not in contact more than about 40 minutes.

We will not be singing but there will be music! You are invited to read the words of hymns and canticles and reflect on them as they are played or sung by a soloist. Because we will be wearing masks, we ask that you make responses, say confession, creed and prayers softly. It's easier on your own breathing and helps prevent additional aerosol spread. God will hear you – and we may find this quieter way of worship to be holy in a different way.

We know that not everyone is ready to regather so we will continue to offer our recorded worship on our church YouTube channel. Beginning this week, the sermon will be available on YouTube, and a printed version will be accessible through our church Facebook page or on our website. We will continue to snail mail the weekly eNews to our members who do not have email, and will include a copy of the previous week's sermon.

We appreciate your patience and flexibility as we move into this new scheduling format. We are also in great need of your help. You are the Church! Each week we need

- a lector/reader for our Sunday in person service
- a lector/reader for our recorded worship video
- 3 ushers for each Sunday service
- Musicians who would like to work with Bill and Matt and choir members for Sundays and recorded worship services

Even if you have not previously served as a reader, usher, or musician, we welcome you. This pandemic can have hidden blessings in that it calls forth from us gifts we have not had the opportunity to share before. Please contact the church office and let us know how you want to help. We have all missed worshipping together and realize more than ever how meaningful it is. While we cannot say for sure how this will work, we are making our best effort and it will require all of us to make it happen. The word “liturgy” in its original form, means “the work of the people” and we are all needed to create liturgy.

Sunday’s Gospel reading is the account of the feeding of the five thousand. While we are not yet able to share communion together, we hope that will happen soon. Yet there is a word in this passage for us now as we begin to regather. Jesus was gathering the people to feed them, and the disciples were not so sure there would be enough resources – we have nothing here but five loaves and two fish. But Jesus took their offerings – he blessed, broke and gave them to everyone gathered there – and there was more than enough!

For worship we need the people to gather in hope. We need 3 ushers, one reader, and a musician or two. As the priest, I can make worship happen with that! So please join in and the miracle of worship will happen, furthering the miracle of God’s abundant grace in the world outside of the doors of Christ and Grace.