



St. Mary's Episcopal Church

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The Fifteenth Tuesday after Pentecost; September 8, 2020

Dear St. Mary's Parish Family,

I am glad to share with you some news about **this coming Sunday, September 13** - the day that we will be observing the Feast Day of St. Mary!

First, it will be the **kick-off to our Program Year**, highlighted by a Ministry Fair that reflects the times in which we live. You can expect information and displays in-person that day as well as a digital way to learn and engage with our ministries. Stay tuned for more information!

Second, at our outdoor liturgy (weather permitting), we will be celebrating **the baptism of Chansley Poole**, daughter of Diane and Carson Poole. What incredible joy it will be to welcome her into the household of God through the St. Mary's parish family!

Third, **September 13 will mark the beginning of our return to Holy Eucharist with the physical elements present at our Outdoor Liturgies**. The following items describe the ways that we'll be able to celebrate the Eucharist together:

- Following the current diocesan guidelines (see the link provided below), only the bread will be consumed. The Episcopal Church and Anglican Tradition have consistently taught that Christ is fully present in the bread and fully present in the wine of communion. To receive in "one kind," as we will be doing during this season, is not to receive "half communion."
- For those who would prefer to not receive the bread at Eucharist, a prayer for Spiritual Communion will be included in the bulletin.
- The clergy will use hand sanitizer immediately before the administration of communion.
- Those who wish to receive the bread will be asked to stand at the time of distribution so that the clergy will know where to bring the Eucharistic element. Worshipers in vehicles may remain inside if they wish - the clergy will come near to see if you would like to receive the Eucharist. Several medical professionals of our community have recommended that bringing the Eucharist to worshipers (rather than worshipers coming to the clergy) is the safest option at this time.
- Especially during this part of the liturgy when social distancing will not be possible, face coverings must be worn. The clergy will place the bread into the outstretched hands of the communicant without touching the other person. Only after the clergy moves away should the communicant adjust the face covering to consume the bread.

Because many parishioners are returning home to Kinston and may be considering worshipping in person at St. Mary's for the first time since the pandemic began, I want to remind our whole community of some of the "Starting Point Considerations" for our in-person worship gatherings as written in my last Pastoral Letter (a link to the full letter is also below):

- Worshipers **must bring their own seating** (chairs, blankets, etc.). This will minimize the risk of transmission and not require church property to be cleaned after each use.
- Worshipers of different households **must sit and remain at least 6-ft apart at all times** (Yes, even during the passing of the peace!).
- For worshipers who prefer to remain in their vehicles during the liturgy, an area reserved for cars to be parked on the West Lawn will be specifically designated.
- Bulletins will be available on our website's front page. Worshipers are encouraged to print bulletins at home or view on their own device. Some bulletins will be provided.
- Hand sanitizer and face coverings will also be provided. All worshipers are encouraged (and **worship leaders are required**) to [wear face coverings properly](#).
- The church building will be closed during service times. Worshipers are advised to use the restroom before leaving home, though the restrooms in the Bride's Room will be available for emergencies (access through the door closest to the Chapel, on the Rountree St. side of church).

St. Mary's also promotes and affirms the following general steps for social distancing and reduction of transmission of the COVID-19 coronavirus for all people:

- Maintain at least six feet of physical distancing.
- Wear a cloth face covering indoors, and also outdoors when physical distance of six feet cannot be maintained.
- Carry and regularly use hand sanitizer.
- Frequently wash hands using soap and water.
- Regularly clean all high touch surfaces.
- Stay at home if sick.

If you are someone described as a ["high-risk individual" with respect to COVID-19 impact](#), we continue to encourage you to stay at home rather than risk any chance of infection.

On this last note, I want you to know that **we will certainly continue to provide digital resources** for worship from home through our [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#) platforms. Those liturgies will remain liturgies of Holy Eucharist: Rite 2 (Spiritual Communion) until further notice.

Friends, regardless of where you are and how we are to connect in our common lives of faith, let our prayers for one another and the world bind us together in this and in every time.

Peace,



The Rev. Thomas P.H. Warren, Rector

Link to the [Diocesan Guidelines for Public Worship during the Coronavirus Pandemic](#)

Link to [Fr. Tom's Pastoral Letter outlining Public Worship at St. Mary's from May 14](#)