



St. Mary's Episcopal Church

800 Rountree Street
Kinston, North Carolina 28501-3655
www.stmaryskinston.com

Telephone: (252) 523-6146

Fax: (252) 523-5134

The Tuesday after the 25th Sunday after Pentecost; November 17, 2021

Dear St. Mary's Parish Family,

In recent months, our vestry meetings have included regular updates from a COVID Advisory Board to help us make decisions that appropriately reflect the current state of the pandemic in our area. At the November 15 meeting, based on the improved situation, the following changes were decided to be made effective immediately for gatherings at St. Mary's:

1. All social distancing requirements are lifted at St. Mary's Church, though we encourage all people to be attentive and mindful of the desires of others.
2. With regard to the need for face coverings, the familiar Anglican phrase regarding private confession continues to apply: **All may, some should, none must.**
 - **All may wear a face covering.**
 - **Some should wear a face covering.** At this time, the CDC guidance is that all persons 2 years old and older should wear a face covering indoors, vaccinated or not, in counties with "substantial" or "high" rates of COVID transmission. Visit this map to see the current rates of transmission in our area - <https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#county-view>
 - **None must wear a face covering.** In this sense, we are following our Governor's latest Executive Orders and Bishop's guidance. But we can certainly hope that all who should wear a face covering will do so.
3. Now that the weather has turned colder, we will resume holding all Sunday morning liturgies indoors until further notice.
4. We will continue to offer weekly online liturgies on our [Facebook page](#) and [YouTube channel](#).
5. We are also making plans to begin offering breakfasts again, **starting Sunday, January 9, 2022.** Men's Breakfast Teams are being formed again - contact Harry Wooten (Fellowship Committee Chair) if you would like to join a team. Please note that when breakfasts resume, our Sunday morning schedule will be as follows:
 - 8:00 am - Holy Eucharist: Rite 1
 - 9:00 am - Breakfast served in Moseley Hall (Staffed nurseries open)
 - 9:30 am - Christian Formation for all ages
 - 10:30 am - Holy Eucharist: Rite 2

We are also making plans for the return of a number of elements of worship, **beginning in Advent (November 28, 2021)**: the Gospel procession (reading the Gospel lesson among the people in the Nave), using collection plates, singing the Doxology at the Offertory, and having wine at communion in accordance with parameters outlined in [Bishop Skirving's guidance given on September 29](#). Here is how we are planning to share wine, beginning November 28:

- Parishioners are encouraged to bring their own cup that is appropriate for use at the Eucharist. Ideally, these cups will be set apart for this sacred purpose. The church will also provide compostable single-use cups for communicants as needed, available in the Narthex.
- Parishioners will come down the center aisle at the carefully-timed invitation of the ushers so as to avoid much traffic congestion, bringing their cups with them. Ushers will also have extra compostable cups to give at this time if needed. The first communion station will be a single station at the bottom of the chancel steps where bread will be given and consumed there.
- A second communion station will be in front of the Pulpit/Lectern (parishioners will go to the side corresponding with where they are sitting in the Nave), where a Eucharistic Minister will hold a cruet of wine and pour a small amount, as close to the *sip* that would have been taken from the chalice as possible, into the communion cup that communicants will hold out for them. The wine will be consumed there.
- A third station will be near the bottom of the side steps, where a Eucharistic Minister will pour some water to rinse & clean the inside of the cups. The water will be consumed there. This action is identical to how the celebrant or Altar Guild members historically have done their best to ensure that all of the communion elements are respectfully used or consumed. A small collection basket will be close by where the compostable cups may be placed. Other cups are to be taken home with the parishioners.

I rejoice that we are able to make steps again towards these practices and parts of our common life of faith that mean so much. Please join me in praying that the pandemic-related conditions will continue to improve with the help of the Holy Spirit of God, health & safety best-practices being observed, and vaccines being made available to greater numbers of people. May God bless our efforts to love one another as we cultivate and nurture the thriving Christian community here at St. Mary's and outwards to all with whom God calls us to share life.

In Christ's love,



The Rev. Thomas P.H. Warren, Rector