



St. Mark's Episcopal Church

315 East Pecan Street, San Antonio, TX 78205-1819

May 27, 2021

"I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go to the house of the Lord!'" -Psalm 122:1

Dear People of St. Mark's,

What a journey we have undertaken this past year! I am writing to let you know about new developments in our worship life based on the Bishop's latest guidelines. These were reviewed by our pandemic workgroup. Their recommendations were approved by the vestry last week; new protocols begin Sunday, May 30. The Bishop has given parishes local flexibility as we move forward. Our leadership gave unanimous approval to the next steps listed below.

While it is not a full restoration of our pre-Covid worship patterns, there is much cause for celebration as we joyfully resume important aspects of our worship. I am incredibly grateful for our workgroup, made up of our senior staff, Dr. David Byrd, Dr. David Ross, and Ms. Ann Leafstedt, JD. We have met regularly throughout the pandemic and will continue to monitor local public health trends. Our new guidelines as of Trinity Sunday include:

- You no longer have to sign up for church ahead of time!
- Social distancing will not be required, though you are encouraged to distance as preferred when selecting your seats.
- Out of care for our community, masks are expected to be worn during indoor worship regardless of vaccination status. This is especially important since children in our community are not currently eligible for vaccination. We look forward to the time when vaccines are available to all and we can revisit this restriction.
- You may again participate in congregational singing, with masks, as will our choir in the coming weeks.
- Wine will now be available during communion, only through intinction (dipping the wafer into the chalice rather than drinking from the common cup). If you prefer not to receive the wine, you can cross your arms after receiving the consecrated bread. As always, in our tradition, receiving either of the elements is considered full communion.

- Ushers will offer hand sanitizer to you as you approach communion.
- Streaming of our worship services will continue for the summer months during the 10.00am combined service.
- You can also attend the outdoor service at 8.30am in Tucker Courtyard if you are more comfortable in this setting.
- We intend to resume our normal Sunday schedule of 7.45, 9.00, and 11:15am on Sunday August 15, at which time we will stream the 9.00 and 11.15am services.

A calendar of events will be mailed to you in *The Messenger* in early August with details about formation and other parish life events. During the summer we will continue to prioritize construction efforts in the parish house so we can offer nursery and Sunday school for all ages as those spaces are completed on the first and second floors.

I am so grateful for the parish's support and commitment during these times. We were promised on Pentecost that the Holy Spirit will be among us. This ability to join in worship in these ways feels like a true gift, and I am so very grateful.

Peace,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Elizabeth C Knowlton" with a small cross symbol at the end.

The Rev. Elizabeth C. Knowlton