



CHRIST CHURCH

1415 Pelhamdale Avenue
Pelham, New York 10803

Telephone (914) 738-5515

Facsimile (914) 712-0526

The Rev. Matthew Hoxsie Mead, Rector

THE RECTOR'S CHRONICLE

PARISH UPDATE : OCTOBER 6, 2020

Dear Members and Friends of Christ Church,

I write this week with a longer Chronicle than usual. This Chronicle is divided into nine sections:

1. Guidelines on In-Person Worship
2. Holy Day Eucharist and Tuesday Morning Prayer
3. Online Worship
4. Confirmation Class
5. Sunday School & Children's Events
6. Around the Parish
7. Buildings & Grounds Update
8. Financial Update
9. Benediction

1. GUIDELINES ON IN-PERSON WORSHIP

Over the past two months we have gradually resumed a more normal worship schedule and routine. The Holy Eucharist is offered each Sunday at 8am and 10am in the church, and at 5pm on Holy Days (more on that below).

This Sunday worship experience is a hybrid of sorts: prayers, creed, confession, organ music, etc. are all offered by the clergy and organist as usual; for a host of practical and safety reasons, Scripture, music, and sermon are prerecorded and shown on the screens in the church. On Holy Days, everything (including readings and brief homily) is spoken by the priest in a mask. As an aside, you will understand immediately why we are not reading scripture or preaching sermons "live" once you've experienced a masked homily. The in-person worship experience is quite good. I will admit that it takes a minute to get used to the aesthetics of over half of the church pews roped off, no prayer books or hymnals, green arrows all over the floor, and visible audio/video equipment that we require for recording our online services. If you are comfortable doing so, I encourage you to come to a Eucharist in the church. We are offering worship safely, and all things considered, in the best way we can.

If you plan to attend on Sunday morning, please RSVP to the Parish Office in advance to ensure a space – we haven't filled up yet on Sunday, but RSVPs greatly help so we have an idea of how many people are coming. Walk-ins are welcome at all services, but if we are full, we may have to turn walk-ins away.

No Exceptions: Masks are required (over nose and mouth) the entire time you are in the church as well as at any service in the Garden, you must answer health screen questions before entering, we are keeping a list of attendees for contact tracing, and you will not be permitted to sit with people who are not in your household.

Outdoor after-church conversation and fellowship is encouraged. It is truly a blessing to see people and say hello given how “socially-distant” we have all become.

2. HOLY DAY EUCHARIST & TUESDAY MORNING PRAYER

The Holy Eucharist is also offered on Holy Days at 5pm, as announced. Weekday Eucharists are short (about 20-25 minutes). Weather permitting, Holy Day Eucharists are offered in the Garden of Resurrection (otherwise they are in the church). The Eucharist will be offered in October & November on the following Holy Days:

- Saint Luke’s Day (transferred), Monday, October 19, at 5pm.
- Saint James of Jerusalem, Friday, October 23, at 5pm.
- Saints Simon & Jude, Wednesday, October 28, 5pm.
- All Souls Day (with blessing of the Garden of Resurrection), Monday, November 2, 5pm.
- Thanksgiving Day, Thursday, November 26, 10am.

Morning Prayer is offered on Zoom at 10:30am every Tuesday. Click the Coffee Talk Link on the Parish Website and join in. The password is “BOLTON”.

3. ONLINE WORSHIP

Our online, pre-recorded Prayer Service with Sermon and Music will continue to be offered each week and posted to YouTube at 5pm on Saturday. All prior services are available so you can catch up if you miss a week. Every sermon and all music are also available on our YouTube Channel. If you haven’t already done so, please visit us at <https://www.youtube.com/c/christchurchpelham> and “Subscribe” to our Channel. I’d really like us to get to 200 subscribers before the end of October.

Over the summer we updated much of the equipment, hardware, and software we are using to make these videos. The new hardware and software have streamlined the video editing and rendering process a great deal – what once took hours now takes minutes. Hopefully you have noticed that our videos are getting a bit more polished each week. Please let me know if you have any suggestions to improve them further.

Online worship isn’t the same as in-person worship, but I have to say after seven months, I am confident that there are some significant benefits to having a worship service, sermons, and music available online each week.

- You can watch any time, pause, rewind, re-watch, skip over certain parts, etc. For anyone with a busy schedule or short attention span, these are great benefits.
- A pre-recorded sermon allows for some useful “props” that are not possible in-person. Many of our recent sermons have featured maps, images, and Scripture selections embedded

into the sermon video, which have literally made it possible to visualize and take note of a great many things.

- Our archive of sermons, music, and full worship services provides wonderful examples for any visitor or seeker of what Christ Church is like.
- YOU can spread the word about Christ Church really easily, and I strongly encourage you to do that. Please share our Sunday video or the sermon or some music each week. Email it to a friend or share it on social media.

4. CONFIRMATION CLASS

The Prayer Book states about Confirmation: “In the course of their Christian development, those baptized at an early age are expected, when they are ready and have been duly prepared, to make a mature public affirmation of their faith and commitment to the responsibilities of their Baptism and to receive the laying on of hands by the bishop.”

Members from *last year's* 2019-2020 Confirmation Class (including one of my sons) still have not yet been Confirmed by Bishop Dietsche. All Confirmations and Visitations were postponed without future date in March, and the most recent update from the Bishop's Office stated that there would be no Visitations or Confirmations until 2021. I have already notified families of our 2019-2020 class of this news. Obviously, such a long delay and not knowing a date is a bit frustrating, but there is one advantage, and that is that I think it is safe to assume whenever Confirmation happens, it will happen in a way that allows our extended family members to be present. At least that is my hope considering my parents live in Rhode Island and very much would like to come for their grandson's Confirmation. I will keep you posted when a date is set.

This year's 2020-2021 Confirmation Class is forming in the next few weeks. The Confirmation Class is led by me and Deacon Katie. Any person who is between 8th and 12th grade is invited to join the class – even if you have already been Confirmed by the Bishop. **There will be an introduction for all Confirmation Parents and Teens on Sunday, October 25, from 11:00am – 11:30am.** We will meet in the Garden behind the Church (if it is raining, we will meet in the church) – masks are required regardless. We will go over a draft schedule, expectations, and answer any questions parents or teens might have. My plan and hope is that we can meet in-person at least once a month using the same basic safety (PPE) and distance guidelines that our schools are using and also meet on Zoom once a month.

A letter and email will go out to all of the families in our database with 8th graders. Please let us know if you want to register your teen. If you have any questions, please reach out to me as soon as possible. If your teen is in boarding school, that's no problem; we can work that out.

5. SUNDAY SCHOOL & CHILDREN'S EVENTS

I am working with our Sunday School, VBS, and Christmas Pageant leaders to offer some programs for our younger children this fall and winter. Zoom and video only go so far, but my hope is that we can find a way to offer some sort of Sunday School and also have some in-person events (Halloween is a Saturday this year, and we have a big field – we should do something).

I'll keep you posted on what plans and programs we work out. In the meantime, if you want to help, please reach out to me. The more parents and volunteers we have, the better our Children's programs will be in this challenging year.

6. AROUND THE PARISH

Two highlights of 2020 happened this past weekend. We celebrated our first Parish Wedding of the year: congratulations to Ndidi Alimole and Thomas Palacios who were married on October 3! We also celebrated our first Baptism since the pandemic began: congratulations to Kristine and Andy Des Rault on the baptism on October 4 of their son Charles! In addition to making a new member through Baptism, we have also had several new families reach out to me over the past month wanting to join Christ Church. I am grateful to God that the Church is still growing in this strange time when so much of what we normally do has been upended.

Our outreach efforts have continued through the pandemic, and the Men's Group recently began meeting again to make and bag lunches for Trinity Saint Paul's feeding program. The Outreach Committee also provided a grant of approximately \$3,000 to Hope Community Services for a commercial refrigerator for their feeding program. We also took part in the Coat and Boot drive for Hearts and Homes for Refugees – thanks to all who donated and helped out.

The Tag Sale has been postponed indefinitely, but we are selling previously collected items in the Undercroft on Saturday mornings. Thanks to Jackie Kraft and Eileen Wolff for making that happen! Contact the Parish Office if you have any questions about that.

Choir has resumed in a limited fashion. Jeffrey Hoffman our music director has been recording with our professional singers regularly and has begun working with our parish choir members to record hymns and anthems for the coming Sunday and the Christmas season. He has also reached out to families to gauge interest in children's choir. If you are interested in choir or children's choir, please reach out to Jeffrey.

7. BUILDINGS & GROUNDS UPDATE

Over the past six months with many of our buildings closed or only partially used, we have been able to do a variety of upgrades and restoration work. Our Sextons Ed Blue and Walter Roberts have refurbished and restored numerous sections of our physical plant. They reset the parquet wood floor around the High Altar, completely restored the Parish Hall floor, and repainted and redid the floor in the Old Parish House Apartment. Russ Avolio who was on our Reopening Task Force called in a favor and the church was completely and professionally wired with Category 6 Ethernet Cable and WiFi... for free. Many thanks to Russ and his colleague Kevin for making this possible.

The Garden of Resurrection and other garden spaces have been thoroughly cleaned this summer. In particular, the overgrown area between the Choir Room and Garden walls has been stripped bare and cleaned.

We have numerous outside groups that use our spaces. The Montessori School has fully reopened and is doing well. For two months Pelham Scout Troop 1 met on our field as they resumed weekly Troop Meetings. They have since returned to Community Church of the Pelhams and are meeting

under the lights in the parking lot there. Other groups, such as AA and the Pelham Promenaders, have neither resumed in-person meetings nor reached out to us with plans for reopening. The Episcopal Service Corps program (four ECS fellows living in the Old Parish House) we had planned for 2020-2021 was postponed, and I have since learned that the entire program will end after the current year. Thrive, our long-term tenant in Old Parish House 1st floor, moved to a new, larger location right before the pandemic hit (please support them if you can – they are now on Wolf's Lane).

8. FINANCIAL UPDATE

Rental income is obviously lower than budgeted and remains a major concern for 2021, but our parish finances are currently stable due to the continued support of our members, the one-time PPP loan/grant we received, and assessment relief from our diocese. Many thanks to Amy Heese and John Fox for their work on PPP; thanks also to the Diocese of New York which granted an across the board 25% reduction to any parish that needed it for 2020.

Please keep your pledges up to date, please continue to make your regular donations that keep Christ Church open and operational. If you haven't already done so, I ask you to consider making your donation/pledge through Parish Giving (there is a link on our web site: <https://christchurchpelham.org/>).

Last week Facebook (finally) approved a "Donate" button for our Parish Facebook Page (<https://www.facebook.com/ChristChurchPelham>). It works! I raised \$2,000 for Christ Church in four days simply by starting one of those FB fundraisers in thanksgiving for reopening and resuming in-person worship on the anniversary of my Institution as Rector. FB fundraisers are excellent ways for organizations/churches to raise money from people who appreciate what the organization does but don't normally get an "ask" for support. On your birthday or on some other occasion, please consider doing your own FB fundraiser for Christ Church.

As we move into Stewardship Season, I hope you will consider making (and if possible increasing) your pledge to Christ Church for 2021. Stewardship Kickoff Sunday is October 18 and Pledge Card Sunday is November 22. In between those dates our Stewardship Committee chaired this year by Kari Black will reach out to all of you with information and an appeal.

9. BENEDICTION

I am grateful for the amazing generosity and support that our members and friends have shown throughout 2020, and I am looking forward to 2021 when, God willing, we can resume more of our normal parish activities. There are many bright spots in the midst of this pandemic, and the church continues to offer the Sacraments, community, outreach and pastoral care.

We are not yet back to "normal" when it comes to worship or parish life. I don't know when "normal" will resume, but I assume it will not be in 2020. We must remember that we are still living in the midst of a deadly and very contagious pandemic. We will continue to do things safely, and I suspect normalcy will return very gradually. I believe that we are doing the best we can do at Christ Church given the circumstances. I greatly appreciate all of the feedback I have received. It is always nice to hear that something was done well. It is always helpful to receive constructive feedback

about how something might be done better or differently. Our first video on March 15 literally came out sideways, so all things considered, at least we aren't doing that anymore!

Over the next few weeks I am going to move through our directory making phone calls to check in with as many parishioners as I can. You remain in my prayers, and it will also be nice to hear your voice and know how things are going. I want to conclude with a prayer for our nation from the Prayer Book.

Almighty God, who hast given us this good land for our heritage: We humbly beseech thee that we may always prove ourselves a people mindful of thy favor and glad to do thy will. Bless our land with honorable industry, sound learning, and pure manners. Save us from violence, discord, and confusion; from pride and arrogance, and from every evil way. Defend our liberties, and fashion into one united people the multitudes brought hither out of many kindreds and tongues. Endue with the spirit of wisdom those to whom in thy Name we entrust the authority of government, that there may be justice and peace at home, and that, through obedience to thy law, we may show forth thy praise among the nations of the earth. In the time of prosperity, fill our hearts with thankfulness, and in the day of trouble, suffer not our trust in thee to fail; all which we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matthew Hoxsie Mead". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the beginning and a long horizontal stroke across the middle.

The Reverend Matthew Hoxsie Mead, Rector