



Christ Church

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The Rev. Matthew Hoxsie Mead, Rector

March 10, 2021

Dear Members and Friends of Christ Church,

I write with some very important information about our Easter Day & Holy Week Schedule and other updates around worship and reopening. Please take a few moments to read this entire Chronicle so that you are aware of what is happening at Christ Church.

EASTER DAY & HOLY WEEK WORSHIP & SCHEDULE

Each of the services noted below will be offered in the church with the windows and doors open (weather permitting). RSVPs are strongly recommended for these services though they are not required. That said, if you do not RSVP, you are not guaranteed a space, and you may have to sit in overflow seating (with live-stream) which will be available in the Parish Hall and/or outside the church. All services will be live-streamed to our YouTube channel.

Palm / Passion Sunday is March 28, and worship will be offered at 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. Weather permitting, the 10:00 a.m. service will begin outdoors with the Palm Gospel & Palm Blessing at 10:00 a.m. – those who wish to depart with their blessed palms are free to do so, but I recommend watching the rest of the service online which will include a really great version of the Passion Narrative recorded these past few weeks by numerous parishioners.

Maundy Thursday is April 1, and worship will be offered at 7:30 p.m. **Good Friday** is April 2, and worship will be offered at 12:00 noon. **Easter Eve** is April 3, and the Easter Vigil will be offered at 7:30 p.m. The Easter Vigil will begin outside with the blessing of the Easter Fire and lighting of the Paschal Candle. Those who wish to leave after this brief outdoor portion are free to do so. Please bring a hand bell to the Easter Vigil.

Easter Day is April 4, 2020, and worship will be offered at 8:00 a.m., 9:30 a.m., and 11:00 a.m. At each of these Easter Day services, one of our Deacons will administer the Holy Eucharist to anyone who is not comfortable going indoors for Holy Communion. **Please RSVP to the Parish Office to reserve your spot for Easter Day as soon as possible.**

Following each Easter Day service (at about 9:00 a.m., 10:30 a.m., and 12:00 noon) attendees and anyone else who is able to stop by the church are invited to gather outside on the field to sing several Easter Hymns (masks and social distancing of 12 feet are required for this – even

outdoors). During these hymn sings, one of our Deacons will be available to administer the Holy Eucharist to anyone who has not yet received Easter Communion.

IN-PERSON & LIVE-STREAMED WORSHIP

We are currently restricted to 50% capacity (about 100 people total) indoors, but due to the layout of our worship space that number is more like 50-70 people total with social distancing. We can increase that total by adding overflow space in the Parish Hall and/or outside the church (when the weather is nice). We have a very large movie screen and projector on which those in overflow areas can watch the live-stream of our worship. Those seated in overflow areas can also receive Holy Communion in the church or outside from one of the Deacons.

Masks and social distancing are required throughout worship regardless of whether we are indoors or outdoors. The preacher and readers are allowed, according to the guidelines provided by the CDC, State of New York, and our Bishop, to remove their masks temporarily while preaching/reading as long as they are at a safe distance from anyone else. It is difficult to navigate the optics of removing a mask in an indoor, congregant setting while still following the guidelines of what has been determined to be safe in that same setting, and so for the time being the preacher/readers will not remove their masks.

Our current in-person worship service includes some pre-recorded hymns and choral music. Congregational and full choir singing is not currently possible in our space because we need to be 12 feet apart, even when masked, to sing together. On Palm Sunday and Good Friday the Passion Narratives will also be pre-recorded – if I may say so, the Passions are quite excellent and different from each other this year. Everything else (prayers, preaching, readings, organ music, etc.) is live.

The church still has a number of social distance and traffic-flow barriers and markers visible and those will remain for some time. The large TVs have been moved off to the side and are still used for the service program (we have not yet gone back to paper bulletins) and pre-recorded hymns. Additionally, our live-stream setup is not (yet) permanent which means that there are several tripods set up in the midst of the pews. We are looking into the costs and other challenges of making live-streaming permanent (and invisible in our space), and we hope to have a long-term plan by this summer.

Our first live-stream was Sunday, March 7. Beginning Sunday, March 14, we will live-stream worship to our YouTube channel. The pre-recorded worship services that have served us for the last year have run their course and will no longer be offered.

REOPENING & RESUMING REGULAR PARISH LIFE

Every member of the parish clergy and staff has received at least one vaccination dose. I receive my second dose on March 19, Saint Joseph's Day, which means I will be fully inoculated by Good Friday and in time for Easter. I strongly encourage everyone who is eligible to seek out a vaccine appointment as soon as possible. If you have any difficulty getting an appointment,

please contact Deacon Katie, John Fox, or me. We have all navigated the online system and can offer you help.

Over the past few months we have been running a “pop up” Tag Sale out of the Undercroft. On behalf of the entire parish, I want to thank Jackie Kraft and Eileen Wolfe for their hard work, ingenuity, and commitment to this ministry that has lent the parish a sense of normalcy and also brought in a good amount of fund-raising income! As we move into Spring the Undercroft will be returned to use by AA and other groups. They have notified us that they plan to resume socially distant, masked, in-person meetings in April. Jackie and Eileen are planning an outdoor, multi-weekend, “everything must go” Tag Sale at the end of March. Exact details will be available soon, but I hope you can lend a hand, advertise the event, and buy some items. Please note that we are NOT receiving any new inventory as the purpose is “everything must go.”

In the brief period after the Tag Sale items are removed from the Undercroft and our AA and groups return, one of our local Eagle Scout candidates, Nate H, will be doing some work renovating cabinetry in the Kitchen. Nate is also a member of the 2019-2020 Confirmation Class. I am looking forward to a spruced-up kitchen, and grateful that Nate is working with us on this project. Prior to his work, we are seeking a few strong people to move the old and broken steamer tray warmer out of the kitchen – please let me or John Fox know if you are willing and able to lend a hand with that.

We are nearing the end of this long COVID-19 tunnel. Please keep your masks on, practice social distancing, wash your hands, and get a vaccine as soon as you are eligible. Thank you all for your patience and prayers over the past year. If you have any questions or feedback about our schedules or worship, please reach out to me or Marie Main. We are doing what we can to ensure that we have the happiest Easter that we can in 2021. God bless you!

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 end.

The Reverend Matthew Hoxsie Mead, Rector