



June 19, 2020

Dear Friends,

Today, Bishop White has published an update to his March 20th Pastoral Directive. In it, he lifts his restriction on in-person gatherings, putting the decisions on when, and how, to re-gather in the hands of local congregational leadership effective July 1. In light of these changes, the Restart Task Force met on Wednesday to evaluate our own plans, the worship survey, COVID-19 cases in Warren County, and our call to radiate God's love to all.

We are in unanimous agreement that while we might want to be back together, worshipping with joy and wonder on Sunday mornings, as soon as possible after July 1st, we know that taking it slow and opening up in stages is where God is calling us at this time. This is in keeping with the Bishop's Directives 20 and 21, which encourage us to do this all gradually, to learn and adjust, and to take the ongoing threat of this virus seriously. If we've learned anything in the past few weeks, it is that we might be tired of COVID-19, but it isn't done with us yet, even as the summer heats up.

Father Mark Linder, former Rector here, would often begin the announcements by saying, "Welcome to Christ Church, a good place to say your prayers." In the three months since the Coronavirus pandemic forced us to move our worship services online, many of us have come to understand just how true that statement really is. Not only do we miss Holy Eucharist and being in community with our friends and siblings in Christ, but we also miss the holiness of our sacred space. While we are not yet ready to add in-person worship to the current **Church at Home** plan, we will soon begin a new phase, easing our way back.

A Good Place to Say Your Prayers will see the nave opened for individuals or families to come for prayer during the week. Via Sign-up Genius or by calling to register, the nave will be available for 30-minute prayer times on the half-hour between 9:30 and 3:30, Monday through Thursday. Evening hours will be made available as well. Staff will sanitize the space between prayer times. Evening hours are still being worked out. Upon entering the building through the glass State Street doors, social distancing protocols will be in place, masks will be required, temperature checks and health screenings will be administered by a member of the staff, and you'll be given a card to leave in the pew where you pray to indicate where cleaning needs to take place.

There are still a few steps we need to take to prepare our building, so as of today, we cannot say for certain when **A Good Place to Say Your Prayers** will begin, but it is likely by mid-to-late July. The Restart Task Force will meet every other week to make sure all of our plans are prayerfully discerned and well thought out. After seeing how **A Good Place to Say Your Prayers** works, we will re-evaluate when Sunday morning, in-person worship can begin at a meeting on August 4th.

Attached to this letter are two draft documents. One is our phase in plan as it stands now. The other is what Sunday mornings will look like when we are able to add **Church in the Pews** to our ongoing **Church at Home**. I encourage you to look both over carefully and please let me know if you have any questions, concerns, or comments.

Grace and Peace,

Fleeter