

5/27/2020

Dear St. Edward's Family,

Greetings in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

It is with great anticipation I write to you regarding the re-opening of in-person worship this Sunday, May 31st – Pentecost Sunday. We are thankful that our Bishop has given us the green light to gather in person again providing that we follow the diocesan guidelines.

Please know that we are doing what we can to provide a safe time of worship for anyone to participate in. However, many of you may still choose to worship through our online service. If you choose to do so, please do not feel pressure to attend or feel guilty for not being there this Sunday or in the coming weeks. If you do not think it is appropriate for you to worship in-person for health related reasons or because you do not agree with some of the restrictions we *strongly* encourage you to stay home and worship with us online. Moreover, if you are sick, ill, or experiencing flu like symptoms please do not come to church at this time. With much prayer we hope that the virus will continue to dissipate and that we will be able to loosen the guidelines through the direction of the Diocese of Central Florida.

We are adhering to the guidelines and polices as were presented to us by our diocese. Please note the following regarding our worship this Sunday.

1. We will have worship at 8:00 AM (Rite 1) and 10:00 AM (Rite 2) on Sunday. Our 8:00 Rite 1 worship will be recorded and uploaded for online worship by 10:30 AM on Sunday. We will also have our noon healing service on Wednesday June 3rd. We are limited to *50 people* per in-person time of worship. At this time that is all that we will allow in the sanctuary. We do have overflow space in a separate room with a viewing screen for about 15 people.
2. As you come to church a vestry person will write down your name. The *only* purpose for this is to let you know if in the event we find out that someone came to church that same day that has been diagnosed with COVID-19.
3. Everyone is required by the Diocese to wear a mask while indoors. Please bring a mask with you to wear. If you do not have a mask there will be a limited supply of masks available. If you are unable or unwilling to wear a mask during church, please worship with our online format. It is not recommended that children age 2 and under wear a mask. All youth and children (3 and up) are to wear a mask at their parent's discretion.
4. We will only be using the main entrance at the Narthex. Please enter and exit only through these doors. When you come in please find a sanitizing station, the offering plates, and a table with masks for your use. Every other pew has been roped off so that we can adhere to social distancing guidelines. Please do not sit with parishioners that are not already part of your social circle (i.e. People not in your family).
5. Please keep your social distance while on campus. Please do not hug, shake hands, hold hands etc. during the peace, in times of prayer, or after church. You may be tempted to hug or shake hands with people as they depart church, but this should not occur. We want to adhere to the Diocesan Guidelines and the safety protocols that we have outlined for all who attend.

6. Please remain in your pew area during the Peace.
7. Communion will be in one kind only (bread). When your pew is invited to the altar please continue social distancing. We ask that you consume the bread when you arrive back at your pew and safely lower your mask. Please do not feel pressure to receive communion at this time if it is not appropriate for you. More instructions related to communion will be given after the peace.
8. Books and Hymnals have been removed from the pews. Both Sunday times of worship will utilize the monitors for the liturgy.
9. After the dismissal each pew will be released one at a time. This will help continue social distancing in the center aisle.
10. We will not have a coffee hour until further notice.
11. We will not have Sunday School at least until school resumes in August.
12. We will not offer nursery care until further notice.
13. Please know that the Sanctuary will be sanitized prior to each time of worship. We will only be using the two new restrooms in the hallway. These bathrooms will also be sanitized between the 8:00 and 10:00 times of worship.
14. Our food drive for Lake Cares Food Pantry is now on *Sundays*. There will be a donation center outside from 8:00 AM to 11:00 AM each Sunday. Even if you are not attending in-person worship you can drop by your donations on Sunday morning.

Thank you for your grace and consideration as we move forward with our Church gathering in person. This is new for all of us including the clergy, vestry, and musicians. We'll probably make some mistakes or get something not-quite-right. However, we will make adjustments each week and get a little better at it as we move forward. Please be in prayer that we will be able to continue worship in a safe space and that our Lord Jesus Christ will be magnified.

By the way, don't forget to wear red for Pentecost.

Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name. For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations. (Psalm 100:4-5)

Blessings and Peace,

Rev. Mark A. Lafler

Rector

St. Edward's Episcopal Church

Mount Dora, Florida