

## Re-Gathering Outside

Having “church” during the past few months in the midst of a pandemic has been challenging and nothing like “church” was prior to COVID-19 entering our lives. That said, we at Middleham and St. Peter’s have faced this challenge with new, innovative ways and attempted to make sure all of the parishioners have had their worship needs met.

When our buildings closed we opened our online worship options beginning with a collaboration with Rev. Greg Syler and Ascension, Lexington Park and St. George’s, Valley Lee to zoom a morning prayer at 10 am on Sunday mornings. We also provided links to the Cathedral of the Incarnation in Baltimore and the National Cathedral in Washington, DC for live-streamed services also on Sunday mornings. All of these options were available for viewing in recorded form at a later time.

With the information gathered from the Caring Network callers, it was determined that people missed their home church. The 8:30 am Eucharist Service on Sunday morning live-streamed on Facebook from Smith Hall was developed to meet that need. A recorded version of this service is available and archived on our YouTube channel. This online service option will continue for the foreseeable future regardless of when we re-gather in person on site outside or inside.

On July 12, we will offer an onsite 9:00 am Sunday Morning Eucharist service **outside** Smith Hall (weather permitting). We may or may not do this every Sunday, it may only be occasionally and a schedule will be distributed to the parish well in advance. The plan is to set up a tent

outside the double door entrance to Smith Hall and set up chairs to provide socially distanced seating for about 35 people facing an altar under the overhang. There will also be two areas for “lawn” seating which will hold 40 people. In addition, there will be an option for parishioners to park in designated areas and remain in their cars, accessing the service on their car radio via FM frequency in the front circle (approximately 18 cars) and in spaces around the back of the parish hall.

In order for us to do this safely, several stipulations need to be followed based on directives from Governor Hogan, the Calvert County Health Department and Bishop Sutton. These are as follows:

1. Masks are required for everyone not sitting in their cars.
2. There will be ushers directing seating and parking options.
3. If communion (wafers only administered by tongs) is offered it will be done safely.
4. Singing will be limited to Beth Lanier at the keyboard. Humming is an option as on site participants are encouraged to actively follow the words. Participants in their cars or at home are encouraged to sing joyfully out loud.
5. No coffee hour / food / drink will be offered.
6. Fellowship / small group gathering will be at the discretion of participants maintaining social distancing after the service.
7. Smith Hall will not be open to the general population.

8. Bathrooms will be available upon request, but must be sanitized by user with cleaning supplies provided prior to exiting.

9. A paper and online Service Bulletin will be available.

10. A Covenant for Re-Gathering from the Diocese is available and should be read prior to Re-Gathering.

11. Non-contact temperature taking measures will be administered to onsite participants.

12. PLEASE STAY HOME IF YOU ARE NOT COMFORTABLE VENTURING OUT JUST YET (online services are still available) OR ESPECIALLY IF YOU ARE SICK.

Hopefully this attempt to Re-Gather will go smoothly and be an enjoyable experience for all. As the summer progresses we will continue to explore other Re-Gathering and online service options in the hopes that the parishioners of Middleham and St. Peter's are given the opportunity to worship well, either in person or online.

As always, stay safe, stay well and stay home if you are sick.