



CHRIST CHURCH, DARTMOUTH

An inclusive church welcoming everyone

61 Dundas Street, Dartmouth, NS
www.christchurchdartmouth.com

July 2, 2020

“For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.”

Matthew 18:20

Dear Friends in Christ,

I write to you with further updates on the announcement that we will return to in-person worship on July 19th. I wish to outline how we have come to this decision. On the 19th we will resume our 8:00am (Book of Common Prayer), and our 10:00am (Book of Alternative Services) services.

As you may know, our COVID-19 task group has been meeting regularly as we prepare to return to our physical worship space. Our provincial government has indicated that public worship is now possible. Parishes within our diocese are already gathering together or are in the process of doing so. At this time, our task group feels that we are in a position to gather safely. A document will be released shortly outlining all measures which will be undertaken to assure safety.

There is also an online survey that our group has designed to gather information that can assist us in the weeks and months ahead. Please take a moment to fill out this important document by visiting our website at

<https://www.christchurchdartmouth.com/worshipsurvey.html>

In the survey, there is a section where you can make other comments and ask questions. Please feel free to do so.

On the Nature of Worship

The decision to once again resume public worship has been made after consulting our COVID-19 task group, in conjunction with the Parish Wardens, and Parish Council. At our parish council meeting on June 29th, the COVID-19 group presented the willingness and readiness to once again worship in person on July 19th. Worship and our return to our church space falls under the guidance and leadership of the Rector. Because of the anxiety around our return, I

felt it was best to consult with these groups. One of the things we are mindful of is the age demographic of our parishioners, and we understand that many feel they are vulnerable to transmitting the virus. At our council meeting, members concurred with the decision to return to worship with proper protocols in place.

As Anglicans, we are a “Eucharistic People.” Receiving Holy Communion is at the heart of the Anglican experience. Because we could not gather physically during the pandemic, I decided not to celebrate a “virtual eucharist.” After deep thought and prayer, I concluded that it was not in my priestly identity to celebrate without two or three gathered informally. Thus, we experienced a “Eucharistic Fast,” where there was a period of reflection on what the nature of the sacrament means to our community.

I have also consulted with the clergy of our parish, and our team is comfortable celebrating a service of Holy Communion. At our parish council meeting, members were given the opportunity to express their preference for either a Service of the Word or Holy Communion. It was indicated that Holy Communion was most desirable.

As we move forward with in-person worship, I want to express that Parish Council is the body that represents the parish as a whole. Not all of us may feel we are ready to worship in person, and this is okay. As Rector, I do not want anyone to feel pressured in coming to church on a Sunday. Some of us may not be ready to take Holy Communion, and that is okay. The idea that one has to receive the bread and wine each Sunday seems to be typically Anglican. However, nowhere in our rubrics does it say one must receive. Many parishioners do not take communion on Sundays. I do recognize that some may experience a “theological dilemma” on the opportunity to receive or not receive Holy Communion. If you do wrestle with this, please feel free to contact me for further reflection and conversation.

How the church will be different at this time

As I mentioned, we will be releasing our COVID-19 policy before our return to worship. As we gather for worship, I wanted our community to be aware of some changes that will be made regarding how we gather:

- Seating will be limited to 60, and you will be assigned your seat by a greeter
- You will need to RSVP your attendance and how many will be in your party (You can indicate your presence by calling the parish office or by filling out the RSVP form once it is distributed)
- You will be required to wear a mask
- There will be no congregational singing. There will be a limited number of hymns sung by designated choir members for the purpose of reflection.
- Sanitization and cleaning will take place before and after each service
- You will need to maintain social distancing
- The sacrament will be bread only (no consumption of wine from the chalice)

- Fellowship time will be limited, so at this time, there will be no Coffee and Conversation following our 10:00am service

On the Nature of Online Worship

Because we have had success with our online format of worship, I believe we must continue to offer this platform. Parish Council also believes this is vital. As such, we will continue to provide access to our Sunday services via a live stream. This experience will be similar to what we experienced on Easter Sunday. At present, we do not have the infrastructure ready to do this professionally. Therefore, the council has indicated that our community investigate all options to make the church prepared for online capability. We are currently receiving quotes to install cameras and infrastructure, so those who are unable to join us in person can connect with us spiritually.

If you are interested in supporting this new ministry of "Online Worship" and feel you can contribute, please do not hesitate to contact the Parish Office.

As I conclude, I want parishioners to know that the decision to return on the 19th was not something taken lightly. As a community, we are now transformed. As a community, we look forward to the day when restrictions are fully lifted, and we can gather without fear. As a community, we look forward to the opportunity that online ministry presents us.

Let us be of Good Courage!

Yours Faithfully in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Kyle Wagner".

The Rev. Dr. Kyle Wagner, BA, MDiv, DMin
Rector, Christ Church, Dartmouth
Diocese of Nova Scotia and PEI
Anglican Church of Canada