

May 26, 2020

Dear Good People of St. Andrew's,

I hope this letter finds you well and working to stay that way. Pentecost Sunday is May 31 and, on the day that we celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit to the Church and the "birthday of the Church", I am keenly aware of Pentecost celebrations in recent years in our beautiful church building at 300 Third Street.

Red balloons and babies being baptized... The Bishop's visit with confirmations and reaffirmations... The unofficial parish portrait with almost everyone decked out in their best red outfits... Yummy Pentecost Cake with red, red roses... Singing "spirit songs" with red and yellow streamers... All these are heartfelt reminders of the Spirit-filled, engaging and joyful nature of our parish. I have asked Father Greg and Joan "Joanie" Van Wormer to join me in this Pentecost greeting. You will find their messages on the second page of this letter.

As you have read in Bishop Hollingsworth's letter included in this mailing, we are moving into Phase 2 of **The Phased Return to In-Person Parish Life for the Episcopal Diocese of Ohio**. The Vestry, The Rev. Greg Stark and I met via Zoom on Sunday afternoon to prayerfully discern how St. Andrew's will move forward in re-gathering, compliant to the Bishops' requirements and in ways that consider the nature and context of our parish.

A simple outline of next steps is presented here:

1. St. Andrew's Zoom Sunday Morning Prayer with Music and Children's Sermon (or a similar virtual worship service) will continue until further notice, including after in-person worship begins again.
2. A parish-wide survey will be distributed in the month of June to learn the thoughts and opinions regarding the timing and conditions for re-gathering in-person worship inside our beautiful church building at 300 Third Street.
3. Decisions about timing and conditions for re-gathering will be made based on the survey results and the completion of responsible preparations for safe re-gathering, as well as on-going guidance from Bishop Hollingsworth.
4. Options for outdoor worship and small group worship in driveways and/or homes will be considered, possibly before we re-gather for in-person indoor worship at 300 Third Street.
5. Continued priority will be placed on providing ways for everyone to participate in worship and formation, regardless of access to computers and technology.
6. Provide transparent and timely parish-wide communication about new developments and decisions.

As we move toward Pentecost, I am reminded of the courage, faith, patience and perseverance that the early church, born on that first Pentecost, had in order to develop and eventually become the wider church of 2020. It is that same courage, faith, patience and perseverance that I pray for St. Andrew's (and all of the wider church) today as we move forward in new ways. Watch for the survey and share your thoughts about how God is calling us in this time to continue to Share God's Love together.

Blessings on you all,
Mother June

Dear St. Andrew's,

At Pentecost we celebrate God sending the Holy Spirit into the Church to do a new thing: to proclaim the Good News, to bring healing and comfort, to bring people together in ways that before had seemed impossible. This did not replace or negate all of the ways God's Spirit had been with the people before, but it is something new. Every Pentecost we celebrate this and remember that God continues to commission (or send) us out. We may be in our homes, we may be slowly going back into public places, and no matter where we are, we know that God is with us. So, what in this story stands out to you? How do you hear God calling us to return to Pentecost today? Though we are many, we are one body. Though we are spread out and, in our homes, we are one Church.

In this packet we have included some art, some ribbon, and various ways to celebrate God's Spirit among us. If you've received this before Sunday, we hope you will join us on Zoom to share your art and your presence and celebrate the feast. Throughout the week, use the art to reflect on where the Spirit of God calls you today; remember the other names for the Holy Spirit - the Comforter, the Advocate, the Teacher. Let us rejoice in the power of the Spirit who breaks the yoke of oppression and brings true freedom in Christ!

Faithfully,
Father Greg

Dear St. Andrew's,

“When in our music God is glorified.” (Hymn 420)

Music is an integral part of our worship at St. Andrew's, one we continue to enjoy with creative methods in this time of suspended in-person worship. In the upcoming season of Pentecost, we will explore and experiment with ways to worship through the “spirit songs” that are so familiar.

Music has been a part of worshipping God since early times. Many of the Psalms begin with reference to “song” or “sing.” Congregational singing has its roots in the monastic tradition where vocal music, usually in poetic form, was sung by a gathered community. Some of the music we use today has been used for many centuries, including, “the Venite” based on Psalm 95, sung regularly since the of the first Book of Common Prayer in 1549.

Do you wonder about the recent background about the use of music in the Episcopal Church? According to the 2006 the Constitution and Canons, the clergy were instructed to “see that music is used as an offering for the glory of God and as a help to the people in their worship in accordance to the Book of Common Prayer.” Clergy were given the authority in matters pertaining to music and instructed to “seek assistance from persons skilled in music” so that “together they shall see that music is appropriate to the context in which it is used.” I am very thankful that our Rector, June, and I have a very special and often educational time in preparing for the various worship services. Our planning is enriched by our Curate, Greg, whenever he joins us, often introducing new musical resources or settings of familiar songs.

While music is an integral part of our worship, there are some who find singing difficult. I am reminded of St. Augustine who wrote, “Ye who sing, pray twice.” So, if singing aloud is hard for you, I invite you to speak the words or pray them silently, joining in the singing in that way.

“How often, making music, we have found a new dimension in the world of sound, as worship moved us to a more profound Hallelujah!” (stanza 2)

With a song in my heart,
Joan Van Wormer, Music Director