

How the Pandemic affected Worship at St. John's

March 2020 through March 2021

This retrospective attempts to summarize the story of how our worship services at St. John's evolved during the COVID19 pandemic. It is told through the various articles that were published in The Bridge newsletter or its predecessor blast emails starting on March 8, 2020. The articles are presented in the exact text that appeared in the newsletters.

The pandemic has affected and continues to affect all areas of life at St. Johns. As we enter March 2021, we believe that we are seeing "light at the end of the tunnel" but we still have a long way to go. There are many stories of how the pandemic has affected the family of St. John's—too many to cover in a single essay. Therefore, this essay is focused on how the way we worship at St. John's evolved over the past year.

March 8, 2020 - Initial Changes

Greetings,

In keeping with recommendations from Bishop Doyle, we will make the following accommodations during worship until further notice:

1. Continue to thoroughly wash your hands regularly.
2. For the Passing of the Peace, we will stay in place, and only verbally share the peace—please, no handshakes.
3. The altar party will take extra precautions with liquid gel soap.
4. Communion will be offered with the hosts and the common cup. There will be no intinction (dipping) either by communicants or chalice bearers. The full value of the sacrament is received whether the recipient receives both sacraments or just the bread.
5. Be sensitive to others, if you are not feeling well, stay at home.
6. The blessed water will not be available in the back of the nave.

I look forward to seeing all of you on Sunday, those that feel up to it! May God continue to guide and direct your lives. May the peace that passes all understanding be with you always.

Faithfully,
Ann

March 14, 2020 – Shutdown!

Greetings to the good people of St. John's,

As you all know, we are living in a period of time right now that is a source of anxiety, concern, and lack of knowledge; not to mention, fear. We are walking through a Lenten season that is new territory, a wilderness in many ways, with the worldwide issue of the Covid-19 outbreak.

Bishop Andy Doyle sent out a letter around noon on Friday to the diocesan clergy and Standing Committee with his thoughts, prayers and recommendations for how we are to continue to pray, worship and be God's servants in the midst of this virus. The Bishop so succinctly stated, "We are not attempting to stop the spread of the virus. We are attempting to slow the spread down to a low multiple so our health systems may be at their best and provide rooms and ventilators for those that need it." We learned these lessons in both China and Italy.

So, I am asking you, the vestry is asking you, and our Bishop is asking us to take the necessary precautions. What will that look like at St. John's?

Sunday, March 15, we will have services at the regular times with the following modifications: no chalice, no wine, no music, no coffee hours, no adult education, no lunch, and no gathering of the youth in the afternoon. All services will be live streamed on Facebook, and will be available for replay after services. Information about connecting to these videos will be sent out later today.

Sunday, March 22, there will be one service at 10 a.m. in English via live streaming on Facebook; and a Spanish service at noon also via live streaming on Facebook.

The Bishop is not asking the clergy not to lead worship; the Bishop is asking all of you to stay home.

Bishop Doyle states in his letter, "It is my Godly counsel that we refrain from gathering for worship and in large groups at our churches during this time of Covid-19 outbreak - enabling us to slow the spread. I am asking all parishioners to worship with us from home for the next two weeks."

Staying home provides the opportunity to worship in different ways. Again from Bishop Doyle's letter: "Is it uncomfortable? Yes. Is it irregular? Yes. Is it new? Yes. But is it Christian? Yes. Is it missionary? Yes. Will it require our best efforts? Yes. Will we have to figure out new ways to worship, spread the Good News, and serve our neighbors? Yes.

How timely that our Lenten meditation booklet, "Living Well Through Lent 2020", is based around the theme, Practicing Courage with All Your Heart, Soul, Strength, and Mind. How appropriate, today's reading is "When God Calls Us to Move out of our Comfort Zones". The Bible verses with today's meditation is, "For God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline."

In response to the Bishop's call for us to "stay home", the church office will be closed beginning on Monday, March 16 until further notice. We will be working virtually from home. ... We will finish our Wednesday Lenten series at another time. All outside groups that hold meetings are being contacted that they will not be able to meet until further notice. Vestry meeting, March 16, will take place via Zoom from the church. Other meetings are being postponed or taking place via Zoom. The work and worship of the Church continues, it will just look different for a while.

May we hold in prayer all those around the world battling this virus, medical workers and each one of us—God's beloved children. Your support and understanding are gratefully appreciated.

Ann

March 18, 2020 – Looking Ahead, and moving to the Chapel

Dear People of St. John's,

This past Sunday, Lent Three, found us celebrating the Eucharist at all three services with a very different, unknown backdrop. Thanks to Bill Cox, we were able to live stream and record our services. As I looked out at the nearly empty church, at each of the services, I had a touch of the reactions athletes have had the past couple of weeks; playing games in empty stadiums and arenas.

We, for the most part, are people of community. And, the community at all levels of society has and is being split apart by this disease, Coronavirus. Looking at the world from another lens; as I mentioned in my sermon last Sunday, seems we are being turned back to our homes.

While at home we have come to accept that the next couple of weeks we would be "hunkered down", government officials and the Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church, The Most Rev. Michael Curry, have issued stricter parameters. In Austin: dining rooms are closed at restaurants (take-out only); no gatherings of more than 10 people, social distancing (six feet between one another); and now we learn that our new skill sets of recording services live for virtual church are going to be called upon through Easter. Nothing, however, can separate God from his people!

Today, when the Liturgy Committee meets by Zoom; we will be preparing for the last half of Lent, Holy Week and Easter as a virtual church. Yes, we are going to miss the joy and pain of Holy Week; and the jubilation of Easter Sunday. However, may I remind you of how creative the members of this church are and have been! Lent, Holy Week, and Easter 2020 will not be forgotten!

Monday night as your Vestry met for the March meeting, there was a learning curve with some attending by zoom and a couple in person. Through it all, we arrived at a bottom line which is to stay in touch with one another and to care for one another as a church. Call each other! Text each other! Do the same for your neighbors! Make sure the senior living alone has food, and whatever else is necessary!

Worship options this Sunday and until further notice: online, on Facebook, in English at 10:00 a.m. and at noon in Spanish. We will not be broadcasting from the church but from the chapel. The physical church is waiting our return! The actual church, *you the people*, in the meantime are invited to continue to worship online. Invite family members or friends to join us as we worship together, in a virtual format. Last week, my sister-in-law worshiped with us online from Georgia!

The work of the church, the ministries are still moving forward at all levels. I think when this is over, our technical skills will have moved up a notch, too. The church is being called to minister differently, in new formats, with renewed purpose and call.

I've had questions about the offertory plate. You can give online, very simple, just go to the St. John's website; or you, may mail your check in to the church. See the weekly newsletter for instructions and details.

Remember our three questions for this time of transition: Who are we? Who are our neighbors? What is God calling us to do?

Here is a prayer I would like to share with you all: *Almighty God, Giver of life and health, mercy and resurrection. We pray for all who are sick, and all who travel and who are stuck away from home. We are grateful for all who are working tirelessly in our grocery stores and especially for all physicians, nurses, medical technicians, and scientists working on medical remedies for the great suffering being endured now. We also pray for all social workers, mental health professionals, and all clergy and otherspiritual leaders now providing hope and compassion. We pray that you will give all of them strength and wisdom. We pray all of this in the great love you offered in your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.* (The Rt. Rev. Dabney Smith, Episcopal Diocese of SW Florida)

Faithfully,

Ann+

[Click here to replay the first English service that we Live Streamed from the Chapel](#)

[Click here to replay the first Spanish service that we Live Streamed from the Chapel](#)

March 29, 2020 – Learning how to Live Stream



A Letter from our Rector - Our meditation for March 24, in our booklet “Living Well through Lent 2020,” challenges us to have “the Courage to Let Go of Perfectionism.” Richard Rohr’s comment on this thought is “The only true perfection available to us is the honest acceptance of our imperfection.”

Ah, how timely! As we struggled throughout the day: John Williams, Victoria Mason, Fay Jones, Bill Cox and myself as to how would we best deliver worship this coming Sunday abiding by our Mayor’s requests, our Bishop’s direction, and our own technical inadequacies! Would we be filming inside (like last week), would we be zooming the service from home? How would that work for all? Back and forth we went most of the day. On page 8 of the Mayor’s decision, it speaks to the fact that clergy and church staff may travel to the church in order to offer virtual services there. So, unless there are further changes, this Sunday we will use the same format as last Sunday.

I just wanted to share this description from the meditation, “Perfectionism is not in any way the same thing as striving to be our best selves and striving to do the right thing. Perfectionism can actually cripple us and prevent us from striving to be our best, like when a child who is constantly criticized for not living up to some perfectionistic standards may give up and stop trying...As people of faith, our belovedness is not something we earn or achieve. We are beloved by God because we are God’s children. Knowing and truly internalizing this is key to letting go of perfectionism.” Is this a time to let go of something in your life? What might help you let go?

God is working through each one of us right now in the midst of all of this confusion, fear, and not knowing – he is working through us, His children.

See you all this Sunday – online!

Faithfully,
Ann+

April 12, 2020 – EASTER!



Letter to the Congregation
Wednesday, April 15, 2020

He is risen indeed!

Easter blessings to all! Keep your decorations up at home, Easter is a season of 50 days! I know, I never did find the box with my decorations; however, I knew exactly where the decorations were that were my mom’s; so it was special to have those sitting around.

My special thanks to Bill, Phillip, Catherine, Fay, Victoria, John and Alfonso! I know all of you put hours and hours into bringing the beautiful worship that was offered from St. John’s from Palm Sunday through Holy Week and Easter! I found that there was a beauty in the simplicity that brought us back to what the Easter journey

actually is in our lives. The chapel looked absolutely beautiful! Thank you, Catherine! In the midst of the Corona virus, our chapel has experienced an incredible revival and become an anchor for all of us!

I'm writing this message on Monday, April 13. I really can't believe it has been a month since one of Bp. Andy Doyle's early memos to the clergy and leadership of the Diocese. He shared then, "When we gather we share the virus. Dr. Peter Pisters, president of MD Anderson Cancer Center and Dr. David Callender, president of Memorial Hermann, were very clear: "This is not about the food, nor about the bread and wine, and not about the pews and plates. This virus is spread from human crowds and gatherings." And so it has spread and we keep learning more about this virus. We also keep learning more about ourselves, as a worldwide community now, for the most part, socially distanced from one another. And, as we begin this Easter season, I believe we have learned and will continue to learn, God is in our midst and, indeed, we are His children. His children for whom he loves and cares for incessantly.

This letter and e-blast will probably come out on Wednesday, April 15. A date always marked with civic responsibility as the income tax deadline. Even that has been postponed until July 15! I always remember the date as the anniversary of my Baptism which was April 15, 1956 at St. Matthew's Episcopal Church in Louisville, KY. Much more pleasant connection with the date!

So, as we move through the season of Easter, and do our best to abide by regulations; may we be reminded that when we were baptized, commitments were made with the response, "I will, with God's help". We will be paced and prepared with God's help. Those of you who have a Book of Common Prayer at home, I invite you to go to the Daily Offices of Morning Prayer, Noonday Prayer, Order of Worship for the Evening, Daily Evening Prayer, Compline, and Daily Devotions for Individuals and Families; found on pages 37-144 in the BCP.

Beginning this Sunday, April 19, our Sunday morning worship will be The Daily Office, Morning Prayer. Why the change you may ask? Cradle Episcopalians and those that have been in the church a long time will remember when Sunday morning services were Morning Prayer. Holy Communion was offered every other week, or once a month, or in some churches whenever there was a fifth Sunday. This all changed with the introduction of the 1979 Book of Common Prayer.

On April 6, the clergy and leadership of the Diocese received an abstract from Bp. Doyle to define what is The Episcopal Church's Eucharistic Theology. I have tried to summarize in a couple of paragraphs a 22-page document obviously written after a great deal of prayer, thought, research and processing. I thought it was important to share this with all of you so you too know the thoughts and beliefs of our Bishop Diocesan. May you, too, take time to pray and reflect over these thoughts and beliefs.

The essence that challenges "Who is praying the Eucharist?" and "The Eucharistic prayer is reunion theologically—a coming together of people who have been apart" is enlightening in this time of physical separation of the body of Christ. "The summary of 'liturgical voices' imply, infer, and assume that the body of Christ is present in the making of the eucharist through the gathered community...It is a prayer made by all together and has been from the beginning...We are gathered virtually, but we are not reunited...This [all] brings into question the motion of virtual Eucharistic life...We are meant for each other, and we are meant to be together...What I mean here is that the Eucharist itself is not meant for individuals alone...What we do in this moment matters because it matters how we do it at all times."

Bp. Doyle goes on to say "I believe that the most appropriate act of worship given physical distancing is the Daily Office...Meeting together virtually where we can hear each other's "real time" responses and voices is the very best form of such virtual daily prayer...Let us long for reunion. Let us pray together for our return to our churches and missional communities."

As your Interim Rector, I believe we at St. John's have been very compliant. Worshiping the first half or the Liturgy of the Word is still acceptable; however, worshiping the liturgy of The Daily Office is not only more fitting at this time but is an opportunity to "learn and live" this beautiful service; and for longtime Episcopalians to be "reacquainted" with our beloved Daily Office.

All of our virtual services have been "live time" except one, the Good Friday service in Spanish at 7 pm, which incorporated a beautiful Stations of the Cross actually using the stations from inside the church with voices across the country. By the way, check our webpage; you, too, can walk the Stations of the Cross in English, using our own Stations.

Thank you all for your patience, prayers, and perseverance. May God continue to bless and keep each one of you healthy and safe in these challenging times. Please feel free to call, text or email me if you have any questions, or if I can be of assistance.

Faithfully,
Ann+

May 13, 2020 - Fun with Facebook Live: Mother's Day 2020 Edition



Those of you who watched the 10:00 a.m. Morning Prayer Live Stream on Facebook probably noticed that the video was just a bit rough around the edges. Here's the story:

At 9:55 AM, just as Philip was about to start the Prelude music, everything was set up and Bill clicked "GO LIVE" on the console. Nothing happened. Tried again. And again. If we wanted a live stream of the service, we needed to try something else.

Grab Bill's iPhone. Open the Facebook App. Go to the St. John's management page. Create a live video. Easy, right? Sure... Just a few little details... The phone didn't fit the camera tripod, so it was going to be really tough to hold it steady. Scotch tape and clips didn't help. Fortunately, Rev. Ann had a phone mount in her car that we were able to balance on the tripod and keep the phone steady. (Meanwhile, Fay is running around fetching things, while also trying to enter comments on the video to explain what was happening.) Then we hear that the picture is sideways. Surely there's a setting for that? It was easier to just turn the phone on its side. Some of you commented that the sound was better than usual, others said there was a lot of noise. Both were true—the iPhone has better response for music, but the microphone was pointing away from the altar and lectern. Sigh.

Bottom line: The Show Must Go On! And it did! And we think the computer is fixed and ready to go for next week. We shall see. It is okay to pray for the people behind the camera ... and also for the camera, the internet, and the programs we use for production!

Bill and Fay, your loyal videographers

May 27, 2020 – Moving towards Re-Gathering

"To reiterate our message from last week, our Diocesan Bishop, Andy Doyle, has set forth requirements for re-starting public worship in this diocese. The summary of these requirements is:

To re-start in-person worship: The decision to begin worshiping in-person again is made by the rector and with the approval of the regional bishop, with careful consideration of the following:

- 14 days of declining cases and that hospitals are not overloaded.
- Congregation's readiness to practice health protocols including physical distancing throughout Phase II, expressed in a plan submitted to and approved by the regional bishop.

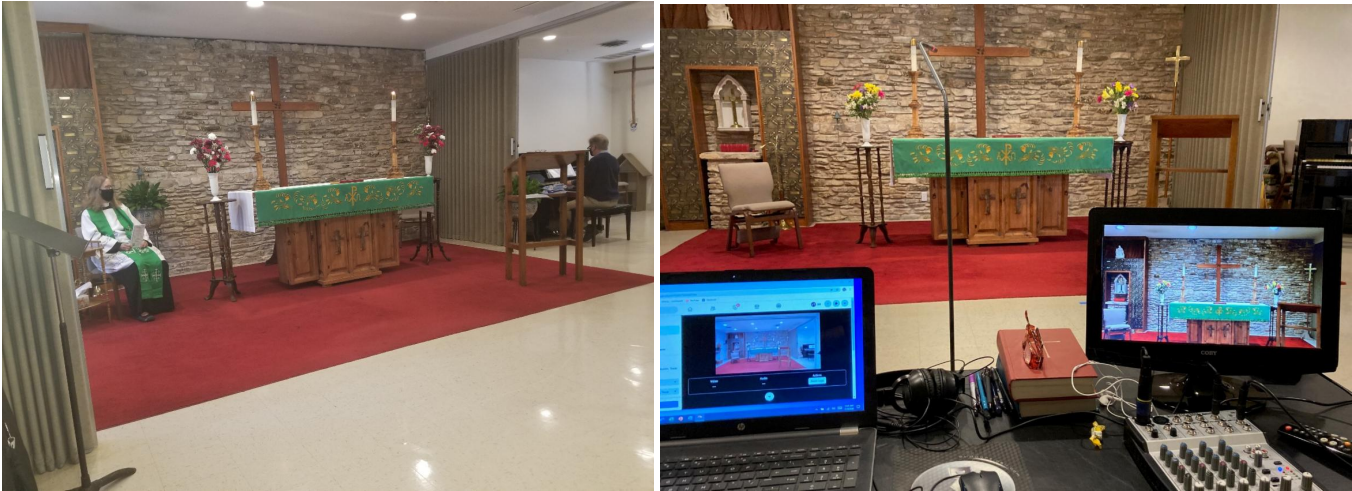
St. John's has submitted an extensive and very detailed draft plan in response to the Bishop's request.

<Editor's note: as of March 2021 we are on Revision 13 of this plan!> Additionally, you received a short survey from St. John's asking a few questions about your own personal readiness to re-gather in public worship.

If you have questions about our efforts to re-gather, please contact Rev. Ann (revann@austinstjohns.org)."

July, 2020 –

We turn the chapel around to give us more space for the worship services



Church Music in a Pandemic

By Philip Riley

I know we all will remember Thursday, March 12 of this year when our world changed, and we realized we were in uncharted territory because of the COVID-19 virus. Everything was different, including the way we experience church music.

As you know, St. John's relocated to our Chapel to offer virtual worship. Reverend Ann guided us with an experienced hand, Bill Cox and Marvin Rasmussen gave technical support, and Catherine Turner and Sandy Welles continue to make the new setting beautiful. John Williams, Steve Kriechbaum, and Fay Jones are our wonderful cantors and soloists, offering praise to God. Alfonso Hernandez and John Williams continue to sing and play joyfully at the Spanish Service.

We learned that singing in groups is a dangerous practice in light of this virus. The Diocese of Texas offered guidance to not engage in congregational singing, but to use soloists or cantors, along with instrumental music. Soloists need extra "social distance" space between them and other worshipers. This guidance is implemented in our Chapel services and will apply when we start public services again. Despite any challenges, we will continue to offer our best to God.

We moved our wonderful piano to the chapel and it serves well for online services. John plays his guitar and Steve shares his harmonica, both amazing. I select familiar tunes and texts that I hope speak to the people watching from home, and even encourage them to sing along. I do miss playing the organ for weekly services. We will enjoy that when we return to public worship. (Don't worry! I've been checking on the organ and playing it some. We won't have to call Triple A to get it started again.)

I miss the wonderful fellowship of the choir, as well as the congregation. We gather for a choir Zoom meeting every few weeks to catch up, share jokes, stories, and songs. Kay and Wayne Harry even shared a quick number featuring a harmonica and their singing puppy. Top that! We have faith that we will gather again and sing as a group, although we are not sure when.

It is truly a privilege to work with music and serve at St. John's!

August 31, 2020 – Bishop Ryan Visits St. John's



Meet our Bishop Kathryn (Kai) Ryan

On Sunday, August 30, 2020, Suffragan Bishop Kathryn M. Ryan will visit St. John's! During her visit, she will lead the congregation in Reaffirmation of Baptismal Promises, as we have been preparing for the last several weeks. Please join in the virtual celebration at 10 a.m. and 12 noon. Bishop Kai will also be present for the 11 a.m. coffee and fellowship, and will meet virtually with our vestry at 2 p.m.

Greetings,

One year ago today, September 2, 2019, it was the “Day After” Bishop Doyle’s visit with us at St. John’s. The grounds, the church, the parish hall, the meal, confirmands, baptisms, receptions all had been celebrated in style! We even had one little girl come forward at the Bishop’s invitation and he baptized her! I’m writing this to you on Monday, the “Day After” Bishop Ryan’s visit on August 30, 2020. Yesterday looked and was different than the Episcopal visit last year; however, yesterday offered something so beautiful, so meaningful – St. John’s doing their very best under whatever conditions and circumstances. The grounds were manicured, walkways weeded, offices organized, and everything neat, simple and clean.

Bishop Ryan is learning Spanish. She worked hard and wrote her sermon for yesterday first in Spanish and from that to English. There was one word that glowed in both sermons and that was the word ‘love’ – “amor”. What is so important in our relationship with God and with one another, our neighbors, is the belief in love. Love doesn’t need a big meal, a fancy church, a lot of pomp and ceremony – love needs the children of God to do as we have each been called.

Sunday afternoon, I received a very nice email from Bp. Ryan and as she offered, “Please tell all how much I appreciate the care they took with each detail, from the care of the grounds, to the classes in preparation, to the Vestry sharing and questions, and the tacos, water, and worship music. I’m grateful for all of you and know you worked hard for all that my visitation involved.”

The Reaffirmation of our Baptismal Vows is fresh in our hearts and our minds; may we keep it in the front row for a long time to come! Yes, it is September, and as we enter into the fall, we will be preparing for so many different aspects in the life of church and community at St. John’s. We have been live-streaming Sunday services now for 5-1/2 months. We will continue to live stream, but will be adding some services that are part of our journey back into the church and worshipping together. Beginning on Sunday, September 20, we will be offering an additional service at 1:15 on the wooden deck outside of the Parish Hall. This will be Holy Eucharist, limited to a total of 10 people. Masks will be required as will social distancing. This service will be about 25 minutes in length. Bring your own lawn chair or you can stand. Attendance will be by reservation, and this service will not be recorded. One week will be English and the next week will be Spanish. We will begin on September 20 in English.

Senior Warden John Williams and I have been discussing this worship opportunity, and feel we have a green light after visiting with Bp. Ryan on Sunday. She explained to us that at the last House of Bishops meeting (now by Zoom, quarterly, all the Episcopal Bishops of the U.S.), the Bishops met with Dr. Anthony Fauci who stressed that the safest place to worship in community, is outside, still using masks and respecting social distancing. Bp. Ryan continued explaining that as we learn more about the virus, the priority is not as intense about surfaces as it is about what is airborne and remains airborne. In another words, we cannot be spaced too far apart for indoor

worship. Services indoors need to be as short as possible. Singing and praying together out loud continues to be a vehicle for launching more virus-filled droplets. Our liturgy team is going to look at how spacing and worshipping inside the church might look under these newer guidelines. Bottom line – we cannot just sit back and wait. Waiting for the vaccine may be a two-year process. Life and how we live it will continue in a world with new parameters. What will worship and community look like in that time period? That is the big question, and the road has many turns right now.

May our prayers continue to be ones asking for God’s blessings, His wisdom, and our perseverance to do as He has deemed to be our call to service in this world; through the love, grace and faith of Jesus Christ.

Faithfully,

Ann+

September 2020 - Holy Eucharist on the Deck

“Limited in-person worship will resume on Sunday, September 20 with an outdoor Holy Communion Service at 1:15 PM. Pre-registration is required; please click the button to register. Please register for only **one** Sunday service at a time so others will have an opportunity to attend. In case of inclement weather, this service will be cancelled.”



DECEMBER – Return to the church



It is December! Back in March when all the COVID-19 information was first breaking, we really did not even have it in our sights that in December we would not only still be coping, but that we would also be buckling down for a second wave. Some say that the second wave will ultimately be harsher than the first.

So, here we are at the beginning of the ending of 2020! We are not just innocent bystanders. We have made it to December, and the calendar not only gives us one more month of 2020; it has also given us a new year already, for we are in the four-week season of Advent.

Advent, the season that calls us not only to wait, to be patient, but also to be alert. Advent, the season that holds us Episcopalians at bay (a bit) as far as no Christmas hymns or green and red

decorations until Christmas Eve. Instead, we have Advent garb either in blue (newer color) or purple (traditional color). Our only decoration in the church is the Advent wreath of three blue and one pink candle around a center candle of white. (*Find an explanation of the candles in this issue of The Bridge.*)

Advent is a teaching season. Not only does Advent teach us about waiting, patience, and being alert, but about two grand events: the First Coming of Christ, God Incarnate, the baby Jesus; and the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, at a time we know not when. Enters in our patience, our being prepared. Our patience is stretched this year; but that is all the more reason to reach out and share the Good News—the gift of Jesus Christ to a world that is very much hurting right now.

We cannot escape this pandemic; it is affecting the whole world! While talking to some dear friends in Cancun last week, they shared the city is packed with tourists. Cancun is just as impacted with COVID as we are and they said the tourists are running around with no masks, no social distancing, and acting as if they are immune because they are on vacation. The extreme of what I used to call the “tourist guardian angel” belief, that while one is on vacation one is safe! Really? Let us pray for our world, for all people, for continued progress on the vaccine, distribution, and a gracious heart in each of us for the blessings of each day.

My blessing for this day is to be able to thank you all for being open-minded, flexible, and patient with your Interim Rector. Today, we have been together 20 months. No, we did not imagine this transition would take so long. Again, we are on God’s time, not our time. Thank you all for helping my family and I through the death of our mom. A special “thank you” to Frank and Karen for bringing mom to church each week! This past Sunday when we were back in the church, I realized that I still miss looking out at the pew where mom sat and that it is now empty for two reasons. Life marches on!

I am pleased to announce that all those boxes in my office are moving down the street (along with their owner) to St. George’s Episcopal Church here in Austin. January 1, 2021, I officially become their Interim Rector; the same day that Minerva officially becomes your new Rector. We still have Advent together: to wait, to watch and to anticipate the coming of God Incarnate and the arrival of a new year with new hopes. May God continue to bless all of you!

Faithfully,
Ann+

Christmas Worship at St. John's



“Christmas Eve and Christmas Day at St. John’s will look very different this year. We will have a single bilingual service on Christmas Eve, which will be live streamed on Facebook at 5:00 PM. The recorded service will be available for replay on our web site and on YouTube shortly thereafter. The service will begin with a set of prerecorded musical performances from members of the St. John’s Choir, followed by the Liturgy of the Word for Christmas Eve. We will hear the Christmas story through a musical presentation of Las Posadas.

No Facebook account or login is required to attend the service, but you must log into your Facebook account to comment or to view other comments. We will have the link to the Christmas Eve service in next week's Bridge.

There will be no services at St. John’s on Christmas Day. We are compiling options for online worship at other churches such as Christ Church Cathedral in Houston and the Washington National Cathedral. Links for those options will be posted on Facebook, on our web site, and in next week’s Bridge and Sunday bulletin.”

January 3, 2021 - Welcome Mother Minerva!

Morning Prayer with Welcome for New Rector - Sunday, January 3, 2021

On this, Mother Minerva's first Sunday at St. John's, we will celebrate Morning Prayer via Zoom. The service will look a little different and be fun!

- 10:00 a.m. Morning Prayer in English
- 12:00 noon Morning Prayer in Spanish
- To participate in our Sunday services, you do not need to have a Zoom account or download Zoom. Simply click this button to attend the service:

Dial by your location
+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)
Meeting ID: 879 9502 6837

To protect those participating in the service from any possible "trolls" who might try to interrupt our worship, the Waiting Room is enabled for this event. The Zoom moderator will admit you to the service as quickly as possible.

The services will be recorded and video from both services will be posted on the St. John's Facebook page via Facebook Premiere later in the day so that you can replay a service at your convenience. Links to the recordings will be posted on our website (www.austinstjohns.org).

Please note: Everyone except those people who have an active role in the service will be muted. This is to minimize background noise. At the Prayers of the People, you will be invited to put any prayer requests into the "Chat" and Deacon Victoria will read these at the appropriate time.

January 2021 – One Step Back...

“Holy Eucharist on the Porch - To be consistent with City of Austin Stage 5 guidelines, the 1:15pm outdoor Holy Eucharist services are suspended until further notice.”

March 8, 2021 – One year later - return to Outdoor In-Person Worship!

A Day for Prayers and Blessings - March 8th will mark the one year anniversary of the last Sunday we all celebrated Eucharist in our sanctuary. To commemorate this past year of pandemic we will open our campus to our members from 9am to 6:30pm. You are invited to come and walk and pray the labyrinth. You are also invited to come into the sanctuary one household at a time for a short period for prayer. Everyone will be asked to wear a mask and socially distance unless you are from the same household. Deacon Victoria and Mother Minerva will be available for prayers and blessings.



Exciting News! - Beginning Sunday, March 7, St. John's will have a weekly in-person Spanish Holy Communion service outdoors, at 1:00pm. The bread will be distributed to each person in their place.

We ask that you use our registration system for our contact tracing protocols and in case we need to give you updated information about the service. We will continue to require the wearing of masks while on the St. John's campus, as well as social distancing of non-household members. Please bring your own chairs or blankets. A recording of the Spanish sermon will be available on our website.

Beginning Sunday, March 14, St. John's will have weekly English and Spanish Holy Communion services outdoors. The English service will be at 11:15am. We will continue to have virtual English services. However, in order to accommodate the outside services the virtual English service time will be 9:30am.