

The Gifts of God for the People of God

Given the current surge of infections, the Episcopal Bishops and diocesan leaders of Michigan have revised the Covid-19 guidelines. Remember that during Phase I, which was mid-March through June, we essentially stepped back completely from any onsite or in-person gathering. Our building was closed and services were streamed to and from our homes. We did not celebrate Holy Communion at all. Then in July, with the launch of Phase II, we began to stream services from the sanctuary, gather outdoors for Holy Communion, and take communion to homes and care facilities. Some groups met in-person outdoors. A few weeks ago, we were ready to move forward with Communion Pods for small group indoor worship when the Covid numbers began to rise. And so we put the Pods on hold.

The current directives are shifting us now into what they are calling Phase I.5, a phase with more precautions in place, but not as limited as Phase I. Since we at Grace had already paused on Communion Pods and any groups that had been meeting outdoors were back online due to weather, this shift won't effect the day-to-day ministries of Grace. Most of the staff will continue to work from home with Nancy and Mary in the office a couple of times a week and as needed. Jim and a wonderful B&G crew will continue to care for the building and grounds. All Grace classes, groups, and meetings will gather via Zoom. We will continue to stream daily Noonday Prayer and Friday Compline via Facebook. And Liturgy of the Word will still be streamed from inside the church every Sunday at 10:30am.

What will be changing is how we celebrate Holy Eucharist and distribute Communion. The frequency of Communion will remain the same. The HOW will change. Read on.

Instead of "processing" to Grace following the Liturgy of the Word and gathering outdoors for the Eucharistic Prayer and to receive, we will now stream the *entire* service from inside the church. You will pray through the Eucharistic Prayer at home and *then* process to Grace to receive the sacrament.

The ministration (distribution) of Communion will begin onsite at 11:30. When you drive into Grace, you will join what we hope will be a steady, easy procession through the Grace lot. Remain in your car as you are guided to either me or a Lay Eucharistic Minister and as you pull up to us, we will offer you the Body of Christ. We will be masked and ask that you wear one too.

Those who do not wish to receive communion onsite can pray the prayer for Spiritual Communion which we will include at the conclusion of the Eucharistic Prayer. We will also continue to deliver Home Communion to those who request it.

The worship schedule for the next several weeks follows. Know that we are working on plans for Christmas Eve and will announce those specific times and detail soon.

Nov 22, Christ the King Sunday: Liturgy of the Word streamed at 10:30

Nov 29, Advent I: Holy Eucharist streamed at 10:30, communion distribution at 11:30

Dec 6, Advent II: 10:30 am Liturgy of the Word streamed

Dec 13, Advent III: Holy Eucharist streamed at 10:30am, communion distribution at 11:30

Dec 20, Advent IV: Advent Lessons and Carols streamed at 10:30am

Dec 24: Christmas Eve: Service of Holy Eucharist, TBA

Dec 27, Christmas I: Liturgy of the Word streamed at 10:30am

The sacrament of Holy Eucharist is a profound expression of God's love for us all. And the way in which we celebrate that gift will continue to reflect our love and care for one another. These are the gifts of God for the people of God, Grace Church.

With many thanks,

Rev. Jen