



May 27, 2021

Dear Sunday congregation and friends,

I rejoice to announce that we are starting the process of regathering for Holy Eucharist on Sunday mornings. These plans have been worked out in consultation with Jennifer McCracken and the MANNA team, as well as other lay leaders and cathedral staff members, and they are in accord with diocesan protocols at this time.

Our re-gathering will be a process, rather than a moment in time, for two reasons:

- Out of mutual concern for one another, both the MANNA community and the Sunday congregation want our return to go well for one another. MANNA has been gathering in the sanctuary on Sunday mornings throughout the pandemic, and the community now contains many new members, who have no memory of or experience with our “normal” Sundays at the cathedral. Similarly, the Sunday congregation has new members who have no experience of worshipping in the sanctuary with MANNA members. A process of gradual re-integration will help everyone to be successful as we return.
- Worshipping on Zoom grew our community to include those far away from Boston and those physically unable to travel. No one had to struggle for parking or fight a snowstorm to participate! We are committed to continuing to offer access to the Sunday morning service online going forward. We hope this will be on Zoom, but we need to test this out and “work out the kinks,” learning week by week how to do this smoothly and in a way that coordinates well with the experience of those gathered in person.

So, here’s the plan:

On Sunday, June 6th, the altar party will join the MANNA community at the cathedral and lead worship from there, while the rest of the congregation joins by Zoom from home, as usual. This will give Deacon Cynthia, Louise, me, and a few others the chance to meet new MANNA members, and it will give MANNA a chance to adjust to worship originating in that space. It will be our “first try” at using our live streaming system to share worship through Zoom.

We will take what we learn from that experience, make adjustments as needed, and do it again on June 13.

If things are going smoothly, we may be ready to welcome the congregation back as early as June 20. But if we need more time to prepare for everyone to be safe and connected, we may need to wait a few more weeks. There is no perfect way to do this, but the hope is that this process will allow us to live into our values and set us up for a creative and beautiful new era of life together in community with God and one another.

What to expect at the cathedral (for now):

- Everyone will be asked to remain masked during the service, except when consuming the bread at the Eucharist.

- Congregational singing is allowed (yea!) by those who are masked and vaccinated.
- Social distance of 6 ft. will be maintained between people not from the same household.
- We will refrain from hugging and shaking hands at the peace, instead bowing to one another or offering a similar non-contact greeting.
- Holy Eucharist will be celebrated, but we will receive only the bread. The presider will bring the bread to people in the congregation, rather than them coming up to receive it. Detailed protocols for how to receive and consume the bread will be offered.
- The baptismal font will remain empty for now.
- We will offer coffee (served by a gloved and masked person) and have tables set up for conversation after the service on the front porch. We will not have food available for a while, and we will not resume Faith Matters until the fall.
- Our bishops are clear that we cannot ask people their vaccination status. While most people in our congregation are vaccinated, we cannot guarantee that everyone is. We will need to trust one another to make considerate decisions, and we will need to re-iterate protocols as we go.

What to expect if you join from home:

- You will connect using the same Zoom link you have been using for the last many months.
- We will have a Zoom Verger who will be the host on Zoom, who will be coordinating with the person running the livestream.
- Our goal is for you to be able to hear and see the service well on Zoom. We will see all those gathered on Zoom on the screen in the sanctuary.
- You will type your prayers into the chat bar, and they will be given to the intercessor to read aloud from the lectern during the service.
- There will be snafu's! We are doing a new thing! Please do not despair, send your feedback, and help us grow into our next form.

Preparing Together:

We will offer two zoom gatherings to answer questions about all of the above and pray for a good transition back to in-person worship.

- Sunday, May 30 after worship. Stay on the zoom.
- Thursday, June 10 at 5:00 pm on Zoom. This conversation will also include sharing from the Rev. Jennifer McCracken of tips and best practices for building community with people experiencing homelessness. This session is especially recommended for those who are newer to our community or have questions based on their experience at the cathedral.

We will bring a wide range of emotions with us when we return. All of those feelings are welcome. We follow a savior who wept, laughed, rejoiced, lamented, and more. It will take time to sort through all of our experiences and feelings, but we will do it together, following Jesus.

Christ's peace,



Dean Amy