

May 14, 2021

Dear Brothers and Sisters of Trinity Episcopal Church, Torrington

While we will continue to offer services online, local COVID-19 cases are declining and the availability of a highly effective vaccine has drastically reduced the risk associated with gathering indoors and participating in activities like church and communion. If you want to join the service in person, please be mindful of the following even with the CT Governor's recommendation broadcast yesterday (5/13):

1) As we will not check vaccine records at the door, everyone is still required to wear a mask indoors. No one is required to wear a mask outdoors.

1a) If you know a brother or sister at church who is voluntarily foregoing the vaccine, please do not harass or shame them. The same rule of love that suggested we be kind and accommodating to those most concerned about COVID-19 transmission a year ago also suggests we be kind and accommodating to those who have similar concerns and fears about the vaccine.

2) For the foreseeable future, wearing masks indoors will be part of our common life. The only time it is permissible to not wear your mask indoors is when you read as a lector, lead the Prayers of the People, or preach. If you find your mask too muffled, hot, or uncomfortable, I encourage you to try a paper one. As there is no longer a PPE shortage, paper masks are available, and we have some at the back of the church. They are light, cool, breathe easy, and don't pull too hard on your ears. They are also highly effective and minimize muffling.

3) To find a seat, the ushers are ready to help you manage the space. We are reviewing updated guidelines and look to remove some of the distancing ropes in the coming weeks.

4) Please hum or sing **softly** along with the hymns: the day when we can again belt out our favorite hymn is coming, but we are not there yet.

5) Holy Eucharist: In consultation with several practicing physicians, we have found a way to have Holy Communion together with minimal risk. Here is how:

- Fr. Nik is fully vaccinated
- The priest will wash and sanitize their hands
- The priest will wear a mask while at the table, setting up, and distributing communion
- A special single-serve wine tray has been procured - for those of us who wish to exercise the option of partaking in both the bread and the wine.
- The priest will distribute the bread from the common loaf. Individually sealed options are available if anyone wants to participate but is hesitant about participating with the common loaf.

6) Fr. Nik will resume his post at the door at the beginning and at the end of the service. He misses seeing many of you, so if you come to a service, please stop by to say hello.

See you Sunday!

Fr. Nik Combs, *Priest In Charge*