



# Mariners' Church

*The Maritime Sailors' Cathedral*

*Founded in 1842*

A National and State Historic Landmark

"Worthy of the most careful preservation."

THE REVEREND JEFFREY M. HUBBARD, RECTOR

May 29, 2020

Dear Friends,

For the past two months we have been worshipping remotely due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As we have navigated (and continue to navigate) these uncharted waters, there have been ongoing conversations and planning with our Staff and Board of Trustees to chart a path forward. I would like to thank everyone that has been involved for their valuable contributions. During this time, our Staff has responded by continuing to work in creative ways, and for the past several weeks we have been working through initial stages to ramp back up to resuming some of our familiar rhythms at the church. Some of these changes have been visible on our livestreamed services: it has been a delight to have Kevin Bylsma back in the building playing the organ, as well Dn. Frank Bateman, returning to assist in leading worship. Some of these changes have been behind the scenes, as our Staff has been resuming their work in the building during the week in stages. I am very grateful to our Administrative Staff (Charlotte McKenzie, Kathy McGraw, and Ashley Cavanaugh) especially our Staff Assistant, Ashley Cavanaugh, who has completed a very thorough deep clean of the entire building this week in preparation for our return. Ashley deserves all of our gratitude for her excellent work on our behalf. During this time, renovation projects to beautify our historic building have also resumed.

I'm very happy that we have reached another milestone and will be opening our services to public worship once again this Sunday, May 31, for a service of Holy Communion at 11 a.m. Our 8:30 service will resume the Sunday following, June 7. (Please stay tuned to your email for updates on when we will resume our Thursday service.)

While we are all excited to get back to worshipping at our beloved Mariners' Church as we would all like to, I must emphasize that worship during the coming weeks will be different than what we are used to. The novel coronavirus is still with us, and there's a lot about it that is still unknown. Accordingly, to help safeguard against a second wave, we will need to be flexible as we gather, continuing to practice social distancing guidelines and best practices as directed by our State and Federal governments.

I cannot emphasize enough the importance of this. Our call as Christians is to love God *and* to love our neighbor. So many of the social distancing directions, including wearing masks, are not to protect ourselves, but those around us. And as Christians begin to gather for public worship again, the world is watching. What will they see as we do? We were reminded in our Gospel reading last Sunday that we are witnesses to Christ. During the past couple months, I'm sure many of us have seen news coverage of churches that gathered in ways that stand in deliberate defiance of commonly agreed upon best practices

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and in so doing have brought scandal upon the Body of Christ. While we will not be perfect, at Mariners' we will earnestly strive to do the best that we can: as a witness to Christ, and out of love for our neighbors.

As we re-gather, the words of Jesus in the Pentecost Gospel are timely, "Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be afraid." We do not let fear dictate our actions, but rather we can redeem this time as an opportunity to exercise the virtues of prudence, patience, and humility, toward the end of loving our neighbors. As we re-gather, it is my hope that those around us will see that we care about each other, about them, and about our community at large.

To this end, the remainder of this letter will be dedicated to outlining some procedures as we return. It is imperative that everyone in our congregation read them in their entirety, so we can follow them together with diligence.

#### General:

- If you or anyone in your household has symptoms of COVID-19, please worship from home. (We will be continuing to livestream services while the pandemic remains a threat.) Furthermore, if you are in a high-risk group (over the age of 60 or have other underlying health conditions) please know that while we will miss you, we understand and encourage your decision to worship from home by participating in our livestream. Fr. Jeff is available for pastoral care or to bring you Holy Communion.
- While we have thoroughly thought out procedures in place, implemented with excellence by our Staff, risk can never be eliminated completely. Please make a wise decision whether or not to attend service in person, in accordance with advice from your medical professionals.
- Please maintain 6 foot social distancing between members of different households at all times.

#### Parking:

- Availability of the Ford Underground Garage has now resumed for us on Sundays. It is very, very important for us to be good neighbors to them and to their Staff, especially during this time.
- Accordingly, the City of Detroit requires that everyone entering the Ford Garage must wear a mask, and adhere to the 6 foot social distancing rule.
- Complementary parking validation stickers for the Ford Garage can be picked up on the credenza near the door. They have been cut into individual stickers rather than the sheets we used in the past.

#### Entering and exiting the church building:

- The entrance most of us are accustomed to entering the building through (the one nearest the door from the Ford Garage) is currently being renovated. For the time being, we will be entering through the door near the Music Room. (The east door on the south side of the building.)
- All persons entering the building are required to apply hand sanitizer immediately upon entrance.
- In accordance with the Executive Order from Governor Whitmer, and guidance from the CDC, we strongly urge everyone to wear a mask while in the building. Disposable masks are available at the church, in our "Wellness Baskets" that also include other supplies for use in the building, such as hand sanitizer, and gloves if you elect to wear them.
- As you enter and exit the building, please maintain a 6 foot distance between members of different households. To maintain distancing, we will need to proceed immediately to the nave upon entering, and exit immediately after worship, without congregating on the entry level. The kitchen and Julia Anderson Room will remain closed during this time.
- If you have your own *Book of Common Prayer* and/or *Hymnal*, we encourage you to bring it for your use during the service.

Worship:

- In the nave, pews will be marked, with alternating pews available, to ensure social distancing of at least 6 feet between households. Please only sit in the pews that have signs attached to them and spread throughout the nave.
- We will not be passing offering plates during the offertory. Please leave your tithes, offerings, and alms in the plate on the table at the front of the nave as you go forward to receive communion, or mail them to the church office. Your continued generosity is deeply appreciated.
- For the administration of Holy Communion, please observe the following:
  - Each section of pews (one section at a time) will proceed one-way through the nave, in a clockwise direction, to receive communion, as directed by the usher. Please observe a distance of 6 feet between households while in line. If it is physically difficult for you to make the circuit around the nave, Fr. Jeff will bring the Host to you.
  - Please observe social distancing at the communion rail. We will have three households on each side of the rail at a time, as indicated by the markers on the floor in front of the rail, to receive communion.
  - During this time, out of an abundance of caution, only the Body of Christ (the Host) will be administered. To receive the Host, place your hands completely flat (to ensure no contact is made), right hand over left, palms up. Gloves should not be worn while receiving Holy Communion.
  - Fr. Jeff will be washing his hands before service and during the offertory, as well as applying hand sanitizer at the beginning and conclusion of the administration of Holy Communion, as well as between communicants in the case of accidental contact. We want you to be assured of our diligence in providing the most hygienic environment we can. The Hosts administered to the congregation will be consecrated in a ciborium off to the side and towards the back of the altar, with Fr. Jeff only touching the exterior of the ciborium during the consecration (in order to comply with the rubrics of our Prayer Book and ensure hygiene.) If you are still concerned, please be assured that not coming forward for Communion, and praying the prayer of spiritual communion while remaining in your pew is a perfectly acceptable option. During this time, we ask that congregants only come forward if they are receiving communion, and that anyone not receiving remain in their pew rather than coming forward for a blessing as is common practice. A blessing is given to the entire congregation shortly after, at the conclusion of the service. (Note that children may still come forward to the communion rail with their parents, even if they are not receiving.)

Finally, while those of us that are able, and feel comfortable re-gathering begin to do so, I want us all to be mindful of those in our congregation that won't be able to join us for the time being. Please be proactive about maintaining connection with them, calling or emailing. For those that aren't able to join us, please know that you are on our minds and in our hearts as we gather, and that we do so not only for ourselves but on your behalf. Please continue to participate from home by praying along with our livestreams.

If you have any questions or concerns about any of the procedures outlined in this letter, please feel free to reach out to me. I look forward to seeing you soon!

Grace and Peace,



Rev. Jeffrey M. Hubbard, Rector