

HEARTBEATS Staying Connected 3/25/2022

Dear Friends in Christ,

We finally are beginning to move back to what may feel more normal. Beginning this Sunday, March 27, two things will happen in worship that you hopefully will celebrate. I want to share what both these things are as well as the important guidelines for which we are asking as we make these changes.

First, we will be offering Holy Communion at the railing again. This is how we hope it will happen:

- 1) People will be invited to come forward in household groups, maintaining a six-foot distance from other groups.
- 2) The altar railing will also have clearly designated areas for each group to kneel.
- 3) I will bring individual wafers to each person, while wearing protective gloves.
- 4) A volunteer will follow me with a tray of individual disposable glasses of wine for each person to take from the tray.
- 5) When each person is ready, they can get up and move to the side where there will be receptacles in which the communion glasses can be dropped. Then continue down the side back to your seat.
- 6) This will be done in a continuous fashion, so that when a space at the railing becomes available, the next group may move to it.

Those who prefer not to come to the railing can also receive communion. We will bring individual servings containing both the host and the wine like we have been using previously to the pews where those who choose this method are seated. Once all who wish to commune in this fashion have received them, they will commune together.

The second change is that we are moving to masks being optional. Again, asking that household groups observe a six-foot physical distance from other groups, individuals may worship without having to keep a mask on. This is at each person's discretion. We understand that not everyone is ready to make this change, so you are also welcome to keep your mask on. We also strongly urge that there be no singing, except for the worship leaders. Singing can spread particles up to twenty-five feet, far exceeding the six-foot safety distance we hope to have. The day that we can sing in worship will come; we're just not there yet.

Finally, I want to express my sincere gratitude to the church council of St. Andrew. Throughout this pandemic (and it is not yet over), they have thoughtfully and prayerfully sought

to make decisions with the safety of our congregation as the top priority. Please take a moment to thank these good people for their leadership during this time and into the future. And let us give thanks to God that we have reached this day where we can recover some of our practices in a safe and healthy fashion.

In Christ's love,
Pastor Jeffrey