



The Episcopal Church of the Ascension

*A loving community in relationship with God, serving Christ
and respecting the dignity of all.*

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June 2, 2020

To our Ascension family members,

We are sharing this letter so that our Ascension family remains informed about current activity around worship and the use of our church campus during the COVID 19 pandemic period. Vestry and the Diocese teams have had multiple meetings in the last couple of months to share ideas and learn about keeping people safe while we deal with the virus and the restrictions it triggered. Chester County will move to the yellow category, based on Governor Wolf's designation, on June 5. What will that change mean for our Ascension family and our worship?

Following the guidelines set by the governor and by our Bishop is a requirement for our parish. We are obliged to stay in line with the hierarchy of the structure under which the church is organized. Keeping our Ascension family members safe and healthy are primary concerns, as is the spiritual health of our family members. Vestry has worked and will continue to work with those concerns in mind while we make plans for the parish in reaction to the changes in protocols for managing during the COVID 19 pandemic period.

Our church building is a beautiful space but it is a small space. Social distancing practices must be maintained in the yellow phase of recovery, and group gatherings can number no more than 25 people. Vestry has evaluated using our building, and knowing the space and distance limits and the sanitizing routines that are required, we have chosen not to use the building for worship over the summer months. We also evaluated holding outdoor worship services. Social distancing and limiting group size are obligations even for outdoor worship. Multiple points of consideration and safety were reviewed by Vestry and a choice was made not to do outdoor worship on campus at least during June, July and August. Vestry will continue to review our options and is meeting about twice per month to be sure that we are actively reviewing information and choices that we have for using our campus.

On-line and virtual worship will be continued. And we are seeking ways to enhance that worship experience both in depth of presentation and by bringing more members along and joining in with on-line worship. At this time, opportunities to join other Ascension members in faith-driven virtual groups are available on Tuesday for a lunch chat, on Thursday for Compline prayer and three different ways on Sundays – Good Book Club Bible study, worship on Facebook live stream, and virtual coffee hour on Zoom. Remember that the services on

Facebook livestream can be viewed at a later time or date (or again) since the services are stored on the church Facebook page (you can also get there by way of the church website. And you DO NOT need a Facebook account to access the stored services). Our school aged kids are meeting over Zoom and sharing and caring virtually with one another.

We also know that there are a few parishioners who do not have access to our virtual worship. Several Vestry members and Rev. Jill are coming up with ways to “bring church” to all our members, keeping aware of appropriate health guidelines.

We have used input from health departments, the Diocese, and other official sources to make our choices as we move to yellow in Chester County, and prepare for the summer months as a parish. Your vestry wants to continue to consider your thoughts and ideas too. Please share with a vestry member or Reverend Jill what you are thinking or needing during this time (a current list of vestry members is at the front of our parish directory). Let us know what helps you to be active in our parish now and while we are not gathering on campus for worship. Let us know what limits you, too.

We know that delaying our return to worshipping together in our beautiful sanctuary space will be distressing to many in our parish family. We miss the fellowship of seeing each other; we miss the beauty of our organ and singing hymns together; we miss receiving Communion. We yearn to get back to campus and our worship practices, but right now our highest priority is keeping our beloved family safe and healthy. The spirit of our faith is not confined by a building or campus space. Our church is us – the people. We are working to allow our community to strengthen our connections while we also discover new ones. We are using and finding new tools for living our parish mission of being a loving community in relationship with God, serving Christ and respecting the dignity of all.

We pray for you. All will be well. Be patient while being faithful.

Peace,

Rev. Jill

Barb Ammon



Barb contact number (484) 467- 1471

Reverend Jill contact number (610) 331- 7135

Ascension Church office contact number (610)-857-9176

Visit our website at www.ascensionparkesburg.org for virtual worship information and to hear music recorded by our Music Director, Melissa Kennedy.

Online Service Schedule

Sundays 9:30am

Thursdays Compline Prayer 7pm

via livestream at www.facebook.com/ascensionparkesburg

(you do not need a Facebook account)

and

via conference call

(425) 436-6380 access code 520695 #

Good Book Club will continue to meet on Sundays from 8:30-9:15am via Zoom.

Virtual Coffee Hour will be held after the 9:30am service on Sundays at 10:15am via Zoom.

Tuesday Chats with Rev Jill will continue to meet via Zoom on Tuesdays at 12:30pm.

For all Zoom meetings, please email ascensionparkesburg@gmail.com for meeting ID & password. Thank you!