

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I know we are all aware of the reopening of various venues in our community. The governments of the states of our Union are opening at various degrees and levels as they evaluate the extent of the virus in their respective areas.

As these openings have begun we are also attempting to determine our responsibility in opening the churches in our community, and specifically, our diocese. Your Vestry and I take this responsibility very seriously. As the first verse from Ecclesiastes says above, "There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens." We have been in isolation for some time and now it is time to think about gathering together again. To that end I would like to share with you some developments that have occurred recently. I will use bullet points for the sake of space to share what has transpired.

The Diocese has provided guidelines for us to reopen both outside and inside services. They are very extensive placing a priority on safety. Any church planning to reopen has to send their plans to the Diocese for final approval.

With the assistance of Wayne Guttry, Scott Mixon, and Audrey our plans were designed for maximum safety and protection of our members.

These plans were sent to the Diocese and our Vestry for final approval. The Diocese approved our concept for opening *when we were ready*.

At the Vestry meeting for May we reviewed our guidelines. There is no problem with the guidelines. However, we are keenly aware that the relaxing of public restrictions on reopening may result in some unexpected consequences. Noting that possibility and our responsibility to each and every member of our parish, the Vestry and I unanimously agreed to delay opening the sanctuary for public worship until a second meeting of the Vestry to occur on Thursday, May 28th. The safety of our members is our primary concern at this time.

We are aware that every one of us wants to be back in church with worship, the receiving of the sacraments, music and the passing of the peace like we did on March 15th. However, for the foreseeable future that will not be possible. We are all going to have to adjust to some changes in how we gather in worship as we will have to adjust to going out for dinner, to a sporting event, or simply to gather with friends for any type of outing. Until a vaccine is available we are going to be in a new normal.

So what do we do in the meantime? First of all, in our daily activities we take all the precautions that have been proven to prevent the spread of this virus to heart. We wash our hands when we have been out. We use hand sanitizer. We wear masks and we wear gloves. Also, at this time we wait patiently as the Vestry and I determine the best way and the best time for us to gather in public for worship and the reception of the sacraments as the body of Christ gathered.

Please pray for the members of the Vestry and for me as we seek God's wisdom in this decision. Please remember how much we love and care for every member of this church. you are our brothers and our sisters.

Peace and God's Blessings to all of you,

Father Bill+

Daily Prayers

Most merciful God,
please open our
Spirits to your Holy
Spirit, using us as
you will, to grow this
church in your
kingdom, in Christ's
name we pray.
Amen.



"There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens: a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot, a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to tear down and a time to build, a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance, a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them, a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing, a time to search and a time to give up, a time to keep and a time to throw away, a time to tear and a time to mend, a time to be silent and a time to speak, a time to love and a time to hate, a time for war and a time for peace."
Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

A Prayer of Intercession in Troubled Times

Heavenly Father, we come to you with concerns for all who have contracted this virus worldwide. We ask, Lord, for you to intercede on their behalf and restore them to health and wholeness. We also ask, Lord, for your guidance to all world leaders, especially, the leaders of our country, on the best way forward to halt the spread of this disease and to attend to those who will suffer, both physically and economically, from the steps that must be taken to stop the disease from spreading. Finally, we ask for your protection over the members of our congregation and our community. Shield us through the power of your Holy Spirit from this disease and assist us in responding to the needs of each other. All this we ask in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Thank You for Your Prayers

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As you may be aware, on April 29th I was diagnosed with a lingual hernia and was scheduled for immediate surgery on Monday, May 4th. The surgery went well and I was told to limit any activity for the next ten days. The ten days have passed and I am doing well, but still experiencing some discomfort. I have an appointment with my surgeon on June 4th and I hope to be cleared to resume full duties at that time.

Ellen and I are very grateful for your calls, cards, and prayers. They mean more to us than you can possibly know. Please continue to pray for continued healing and a good report on the 4th.

We are praying for you and we ask you to please be careful as the reopening of venues occurs. Please wear masks, use gloves, wash your hands, use hand sanitizer, and follow safe distancing procedures. This virus is still very present. While we do not need to be fearful; we do need to be careful and respect ourselves and others.

All our love to you in Christ Jesus, our Lord and Savior,

Father Bill and Ellen

A PRAYER FOR SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

Dear Jesus, I believe that you are truly present in the Holy Sacrament. I love you above all things, and I desire to possess you within my soul. And since I cannot now receive you sacramentally, I beseech you to come spiritually into my heart. I unite myself to you, together with all your faithful people [gathered around every altar of your Church], and I embrace you with all the affections of my soul. Never permit me to be separated from you. **Amen.**

WORSHIP ATTENDANCE & PARISH ACTIVITIES FOR MAY

Worship – During the last part of March and the month of April we held the following services by Live feed:

Date	Service	Time	Attendance	Special Notes
05/03	HE II	10:30	109 views	Easter 4
05/10	MP II	10:30	70 views	Easter 5*
05/17	HE II	10:30	228 views	Easter 6
05/19	Noonday Prayer	12:00	36 views	
05/20	Noonday Prayer	12:00	35 views	

Easter 5 – Led by Wayne Guttry and Scott Mixon

Soup Kitchen – The Soup Kitchen meals are currently being prepared by Coker. At this time we need individuals to place the lunch bags on the tables outside for pickup. The Guttry family is assisting in May. Our date to assist in June is Wednesday, the 17th. If you would like to volunteer please contact Betty Corning at 843 332-0163 or Audrey at the church at 843 332-8765.

Bag Lunches – We are continuing this ministry of packing seventy bags and delivering them to the soup kitchen for distribution on the last Friday of the month. There is no difference between what we are doing and picking up a “to go order” from a restaurant. Nancy and Bobby McGee are handling the details. Please feel free to contact them for more information. The dates for May are: Thursday, the 28th and Friday, the 29th. The dates for June are: Thursday, the 25th and Friday, the 26th.

Special Diocesan and Church Announcements & News

WEBSITE:

[https://
www.stbartholomewshartsville.org/](https://www.stbartholomewshartsville.org/)

There are several important announcements of which I want to make you aware.

Diocesan

Guidelines have been issued by the diocese concerning resuming church services either outside or in our sanctuaries. The guidelines are extensive in order to encourage us to practice safe distancing and follow safety procedures.

Diocesan guidelines have also been issued to resume small group meetings and weekday Bible studies. They are very similar to those issued for the reopening of our churches.

Special services, weddings, funerals, baptisms, and home visitations are allowed only after consultation with the Bishop. Graveside services are allowed.

St. Bartholomew's

Following the Diocesan guidelines, we have designed a way for us to resume services in the sanctuary. They have been approved by the diocese. The Vestry has discussed the guidelines and what we would need to accomplish to worship in the sanctuary or resume small groups in the library. At this time the Vestry has unanimously decided to delay opening the church for services or Bible studies. The reasons for the delay are: We want to see how the reopening of public areas and the loosening of restrictions affects the spread of the virus. Secondly, we have concerns about the health and welfare of many of our members. We do not want to be a source of spreading the virus to those we love and treasure in our congregation.

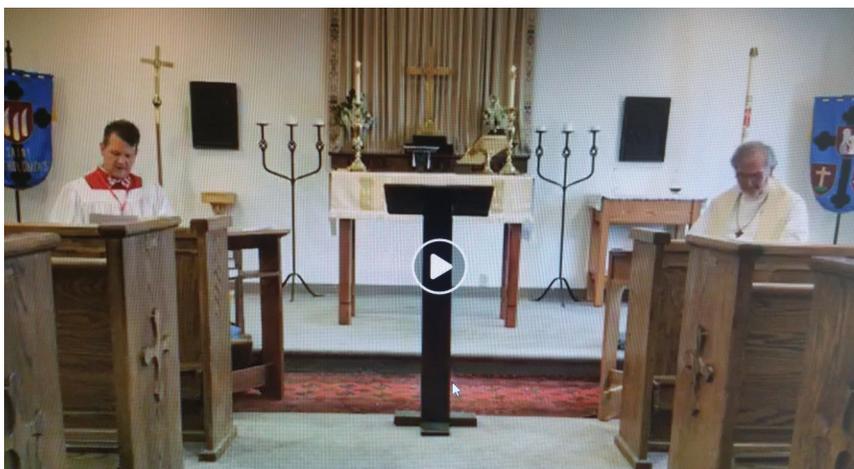
Given the decision of the Vestry, entrance to the office area is still restricted. We ask everyone who comes to the church to please wear masks in the building and use sanitizer. The office area will be open Monday through Thursday.

I have asked Wayne Guttry and Scott Mixon to continue to assist me with live streaming Holy Eucharist at 10:30 on Sundays. We will also continue to offer the opportunity for individuals to come by the office and pick up Reserve Sacrament (bread only) for consumption at home during the Eucharistic service on Sunday mornings.

The Vestry is still going to be contacting you to check on any needs or concerns that you might have on a regular basis

I hope this news is helpful and explains some of the decisions that have been made. Please take care of your selves and continue to pray for and stay in contact with others.

Father Bill+



ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S
CHURCH

SOCIAL MEDIA -

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