

Pastor's Report for April 2021 Church Council Meeting
March 24 - April 20, 2021

In addition to on-going Bible Studies, pastoral care, worship services, justice ministries, and organizational administration, my time this past month has focused on the official hiring of Carol Browning as our Music Director for this year, Holy Week and Easter services, working with the Re-Opening Committee and Worship Team to plan for a gradual return to on-campus worship and programming, meetings and conversations related to transition at our Child Development Center, and support for Travis Davis (Word and Sacrament) and Cecelia Travick-Jackson (Word and Service) in the ordination process. As of April 12, I was fully vaccinated and am now increasing my in-person meetings and visits.

Thank you to all who helped make Holy Week and Easter meaningful and special this year, despite pandemic restrictions, and thank you to all who joined in worship online or on-site. It was a joy to collaborate with St. Columba's Episcopal Church for the Lenten Bible Study, as well as the Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Vigil services. A warm welcome back to Mount Cross to Nora Fajnor who rejoined the congregation at the Easter Vigil service on April 3. The Mount Cross campus was filled with joy on Easter Sunday, as 112 people gathered in the parking lot for Easter worship, joining our livestream worshippers. A few dozen people came by after the Easter service to receive Holy Communion in the sanctuary or in their cars.

I invite a motion to receive the application for church membership of Thomas and Patricia LaCalamita who wish to join Mount Cross by Affirmation of Baptism on Sunday, April 25, along with their grandson, Jack, who will be baptized that day.

Worship Updates: Drive-Through Communion will be replaced by Walk-In the Sanctuary Communion from 11am – 12 noon each Sunday. For those unable to come inside, we will still bring Communion to their cars.

Beginning May 2, the Re-Opening Committee has approved a cautious return to indoor worship. (May 23 Confirmation Sunday and June 6 Graduate Blessing Sunday will be outside because of the expected higher attendance of younger members who are not yet vaccinated).

These are the parameters for indoor worship, to be changed as necessary as circumstances evolve:

1. Seating will be in every other pew with six feet between household groups.
2. There will be seating outdoors in the pavilion, with audio and video of the worship service, for people who are uncomfortable being indoors or if indoor capacity is exceeded.
3. Upon arrival, temperatures will be taken and people will be asked to sign-in.
3. Masks are required.
4. Singing indoors is discouraged.
5. Livestream worship will continue to be available online.
6. For those not in attendance at the on-site worship, Holy Communion will be distributed in the sanctuary from 11am-12 noon. Communion will be brought to car windows for those unable to come into the sanctuary.

*There is a meeting **Saturday, April 24 at 11 a.m.** onsite at Mount Cross for all involved in helping us transition to indoor worship. I really need as many Council members as possible to attend this meeting and to sign-up to be helpers at the services. Ushering help is especially needed. Thank you in advance!

Upcoming

All are invited to two opportunities offered by the Synod to think about what changes to church life and worship are necessary and desirable as we move out of the pandemic.

1. Becoming a Hybrid Church on **April 27 at 11 a.m. or 3 p.m.** (choose one). Zoom link <https://zoom.us/j/95055299857?pwd=cGJSUIZ2VmoycWFHSGVaRXVneUIyQT09#success>
2. Clicks and Community: Ministry in a Tech-Shaped Culture on **May 6 at 11 a.m. or 3 p.m. (choose one).** Zoom link <https://zoom.us/j/98538205766?pwd=T21kWjdqVjF6Vlp2RFZIL28wbTFRZz09#success>

I will be away June 11-25. Vicar Amanda will be on-call in my absence and preach and distribute Holy Communion from elements blessed earlier in the month at the worship services on Sundays June 13 and 20.

Save the Date: Sunday, July 11 Leadership Retreat 1-5 p.m. Typically, Church Council and other congregational leaders would meet the week after the annual meeting for visioning and goal-setting. We delayed that this year until we had a better sense of the landscape. We will meet July 11 from 1:00 - 5:00 p.m. on campus to chart the course for the second half of 2021.

As someone observed of Mount Cross recently,
“In a challenging time we seem to be flourishing!”
Thanks be to God for the daily love and resources given to us
in the abundant gifts, skills, and generosity
of our staff, volunteers, leaders, and members.