



August 10, 2020

Dear Parish family

As We all Cope with the On-going Pandemic, What are Our Next Steps at Mediator?

Since physically closing the church building in mid March and beginning Zoom/Facebook services, our time apart, yet virtually together, has been challenging to say the least. Technology issues, learning curves with technology, those without the ability to even access Zoom* or Facebook are only a few of the issues we, as a church family, encountered.

** A computer is not necessary to access Zoom. You can call into the Zoom service and listen/participate. Call the church office (269-469-1441) and leave a message if you need any assistance with joining a Zoom service (Morning Prayer or Bible Study/Compline). Facebook access still requires the use of a computer/tablet/smart phone and internet/data plan access.*

After receiving the [Plan for Re-entry for Great Lakes Episcopalians](#) document in May, the Vestry discussed the document and made a decision to remain with the online Zoom/Facebook offerings. Over the past couple months the Vestry asked for a Re-entry Task force which is made up of the following members; Linda Anderson-Lead, Mother Darlene, Paul Cromheecke-Sr. Warden, Jan Anderson-Jr. Warden, Susie Holden, Kathleen Hogan-Garrett, Carol Grant, and David Lewis, and their task it to begin exploring how to reopen the church. Reopening with an in-person, in-door service was not in the best interests of our members and Priest at this time and the vestry agreed. The Task Force then began discussing options surrounding an outdoor gathering.

On July 13th, Candice Conley, our Admin Asst, sent an email inquiring whether you would be interested in attending an outside service. We received about 30 replies and many of you (approximately 67%) said, "Yes, I would like to attend an outdoor service". On July 23rd, the task team met to discuss how can we create a safe, caring, spiritually, and welcoming, yet, socially distancing environment while using the [Harvard Global Health Institute's Risk Level Map](#), the [State of Michigan COVID-19 Resources](#) the diocese's [Plan for Re-entry for Great Lakes Episcopalians](#) document as resources.

We're happy to announce and beginning Aug 8th, we held what we're calling, Mediator Worship Circles, which are small gatherings at member homes in an outdoor setting. To help keep us safer, ensure social distancing, and to follow current state requirements, we are limiting the gatherings to ten. Two more gatherings are being scheduled with the second one taking place on Aug 20th. The third gathering is tentatively planned for late Aug or early Sep and possibly on the grounds of the church. After the Aug 8th gathering

the team will get back together to discuss how we felt the small gathering met attendees spiritual needs as well as how well we did with keeping everyone safe.

On Aug 6th, some task force team members went inside Mediator to look at how we keep social distance and other indoor gathering needs if/when we determine it is safe to return to an inside service. The diocese's Plan for Re-entry for Great Lakes Episcopalians contains some guidance as well as some requirements, so we'll be using that as a reference when we explore potential options inside the building.

Speaking of the building and the grounds. The church property (outside the buildings) is open. Inside the buildings is still closed to everyone. If you would like to stop by and walk around, pick some weeds, prune some shrubbery, spray some weeds in the parking lot, go look where the labyrinth will go, see the recently painted shed, power-washed front entrance, or just sit in your car and think of the fond times you had with church family while dreaming of how it will be when we're able to return and worship together inside. All of these outside opportunities are available to you now.

We see several of you on the weekly Zoom services* and know many of you have been following other church services, other Episcopal Cathedrals around the US and even attending other nearby church services, but we're excited to begin these small gatherings that bring us back together in a safe and socially distancing environment as well as bring us spiritually closer. We're also excited that some of you can finally meet Mother Darlene since COVID-19 interrupted her ability to meet with everyone.

** On Aug 5th, Bible Study/Compline replaced Wednesday Evening Prayer with a Zoom-only offering.*

In addition to the small gatherings, Mother Darlene will continue to offer Sunday Morning Prayer on Zoom at 1030am (MI time) as well as Bible Study/Compline on Wednesday evenings at 7pm (MI time). We invite you to use [Mediator's website](#) which has links to so much and provides details to many offerings. Beginning in early August the website will also have a COVID-19 dedicated page, so be on the lookout for this new offering. As always, the Zoom link, previously recorded services, bulletins, and the weekly Mediatorite continue to be on the website too. We're always looking for ideas or suggestions on how to improve the site, so submit any comments/suggestions to Candice Conley (office@mediatorharbert.com or call 269-469-1441).

This has been a lot to read and absorb. Look for greater communication about Mediator's upcoming plans or adjustments, especially as we adapt for safety as an expression of love for one another. We recognize that communication is crucial for community, needed more than ever with more frequency and transparency to help us remain connected in a "small but mighty church". Please let us know if you have any suggestions/recommendations by calling the church office (269-469-1441), contacting Mother Darlene (rector@mediatorharbert.com or call 269-469-6794), or Candice Conley (office@mediatorharbert.com).

We thank you for your patience as we work to bring us "together, not apart" in a safe, caring, spiritually, and social distancing/welcoming environment.

Lastly, we also ask for your prayers as the team continues their work.

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| Linda Anderson (Chair) | Mother Darlene (Rector) | Paul Cromheecke (Sr. Warden) | Jan Anderson (Jr. Warden) |
| Susie Holden | Kathleen Hogan- Garrett | Carol Grant | David Lewis |

Appendix

Note: For anyone that would like copies of the below resource content and who does not have access to the internet, please call the church office (269-469-1441) and request copies.

Plan for Re-entry for Great Lakes Episcopalians URL

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1X4P2OHjQX2fDT4FrEuMGdrCmztmuZbCichTqcni5lrk/edit#>

Harvard Global Health Institute's Risk Level Map URL

<https://globalepidemics.org/key-metrics-for-covid-suppression/>

State of Michigan Coronavirus / Resources URL

<https://www.michigan.gov/coronavirus/0,9753,7-406-98178---,00.html>

Episcopal Church of the Mediator website URL

www.mediatorharbert.com