

Worship Information from Holy Cross – March 16, 2022

Last Sunday, March 13, 2022, we celebrated the Third Sunday of Lent with a Service of the Word and Sacrament led by our Interim Pastor Curtis Zieske. We enjoyed the music of Holden Evening Prayer while we sat socially distant and wore our masks as has been our custom. If you were unable to attend, video recordings of this service are available on the Holy Cross YouTube channel at; <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCiHbmFBDWLG1W-jcI8jRhOQ>

This coming **Sunday, March 20, 2022, at 10:00 AM**, we will continue our Lenten journey with a Service of the Word, led by lay members. Due to the absence of Pastor Zieske, we will not have the Sacrament of Communion. It will be a simple service of liturgy and readings that will give your Transition Team a chance to initiate discussion on the future direction of Holy Cross. Please plan on attending and sharing your thoughts.

Last night your church council met and discussed at length the end of the state mask mandate which occurred on Friday, March 11th and what changes should be made to our own church protocols. Considering the end of the statewide mandate, the council agreed to make optional the wearing of masks during worship service this Sunday, March 20, 2022.

Even though the pews do not have the blue tape anymore, we will continue to sit socially distant and allow more space between all congregants. Please be aware of your seating choices and interactions with other congregants. As there is no pianist or choir scheduled this Sunday, we do not have to worry about singing this week. We will be discussing with Worship and Music what the church's position should be regarding singing and voicing responses to the liturgy. Further details will be forthcoming in next week's mailing.

The current position of Holy Cross is that masking is optional during services. It is requested that we all be respectful of others regarding their choice to mask and continue social distancing in seating and interactions. The Council invites response and feedback and will try to react and update accordingly to people's needs and desires. Because we are in all this together, while masking is optional, we recommend for the sake of our neighbor that we continue to protect one another. It has been a long two years of dealing with this pandemic and only a few weeks until we celebrate Easter. Pray that we may rejoice together in safety and good health celebrating our Savior's resurrection.

Our Bishop of the Oregon Synod, Laurie Larson Caesar wrote a letter on March 9th anticipating the lifting of the mandate. Excerpts from it along with notes from the CDC and OHA can be found on the following page. May it help guide your thoughts and decision on whether to stay masked or forgo wearing one.

From the Oregon Synod - March 9, 2022 - Dear Beloved of Christ,

... We also recognize that for many of our churches, the question is now whether or not to continue to require masking during worship. There is no easy answer to this question. This is yet another stage of the pandemic where feelings and perceptions of risk vary widely: some won't want to come to a church where masking is required, others won't want to come to one where it isn't.

Indoor mask requirements for public spaces in Oregon will be lifted at 11:59 pm on Friday, March 11.

The CDC says that indoor mask use is no longer necessary for most people in places with low to medium risk levels (most of Oregon). (As of Today, 3/15/22 – Marion County is listed as LOW risk, down from Medium on March 9).

For those living in low and medium risk areas, (most of Oregon), the decision of whether to require masking comes down to each congregation. This is an excellent time to survey your congregation.

Do you support lifting the mask requirement in our church buildings and during services? Are you comfortable singing in the church? With masks? Without? How are you feeling about masking?

Some are probably past ready to take their masks off in celebration; others might be fearful that it is not yet safe to. Hold the tension in prayer. This has been a long road and we are still walking it together.

We can love each other through this. - Bishop Laurie

Per the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) you should stay up to date with COVID-19 vaccines. Get tested if you have symptoms. If you are at high risk for severe illness, talk to your healthcare provider about whether you need to wear a mask and take other precautions. People may choose to mask at any time. People with symptoms, a positive test, or exposure to someone with COVID-19 should wear a mask.

The Oregon Department of Administrative Services has lifted mask requirements in state offices when accessing state services or entering state buildings. Individuals who wish to continue to wear a mask in state offices are encouraged to do so.

Masks are required on public transportation and may be required in other places by local or state authorities. Masks are still required on public buses and planes. The federal government requirement is effective through April 18, 2022, unless the federal government extends the requirement.

The Oregon Health Authority has no current plans to lift mask requirements in health care settings. Health care workers, patients, residents, and visitors will still be required to wear masks in health care settings after March 11.

In addition to health care settings, the following settings may have masking requirements. OHA recommends that individuals check requirements before accessing services in these settings; Houseless Shelters, Correctional Facilities, Certain workplaces as required by (OR-OSHA) and *Any business or organization that chooses to continue to require masks.*

**Worshipping at Home with Holy Cross Lutheran Church
March 20, 2022 – Third Sunday in Lent**

INVOCATION

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

In the name of God, who makes a way in the wilderness, walks with us, and guides us in our pilgrimage. **Amen.**

Silence is kept for reflection.

Holy One,

we confess that we have wandered far from you:

we have not trusted your promises,

we have ignored your prophets in our own day,

we have squandered our inheritance of grace,

we have failed to recognize you in our midst.

Have mercy on us!

Forgive us and turn us again to you.

Teach us to follow in your ways,

assure us again of your love,

and help us to love our neighbor.

Amen.

Beloved in Christ,

the Word draws near to you,

and all who call out to God shall be saved.

In Jesus, God comes to you again and again

and gathers you under wings of love.

In † Jesus' name, your sins are forgiven.

God journeys with you and teaches you how to live in love.

Amen.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Eternal God, your kingdom has broken into our troubled world through the life, death, and resurrection of your Son. Help us to hear your word and obey it, and bring your saving love to fruition in our lives, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

READINGS AND PSALM

Isaiah 55:1-9

Everyone who thirsts, come to the water; seek the LORD

Psalms 63:1-8

O God, eagerly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you. (Ps. 63:1)

1 Corinthians 10:1-13

Israel, baptized in cloud and seas, ate the same spiritual food as Christians

Luke 13:1-9

Unless you repent, you will perish: parable of the fig tree

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Jesus began to proclaim, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near. (Matt. 4:17)

HYMN OF THE DAY ELW 331 “As The Deer Runs To The River”

APOSTLES’ CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God’s only Son, our Lord,

who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church,

the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins,

the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Drawn close to the heart of God, we offer these prayers for the church, the world, and all who are in need. *A brief silence.*

We pray for the church around the world in all its forms: for pastors, deacons, bishops, chaplains, and mission developers; for church councils, committee chairs, and all lay ministry leaders; for congregations that contemplate difficult decisions about the future of their ministry. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

For the health of this planet and the well-being of its creatures: for lands impacted by droughts and at risk of wildfires; for fig trees and vineyards that produce fruit for our nourishment and delight; for animal habitats threatened by climate change. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

For those called into positions of civic responsibility: for judges, attorneys, and court administrators tasked with uncovering truth and delivering justice; for activists and community leaders who cast a vision of a more compassionate and equitable society. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

For those who call upon you for mercy: for all who live in poverty and experience hunger; for any who feel tested beyond their strength; for those who are hospitalized or near death, and for all in need of healing (*especially*). Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

For the advocacy efforts of this congregation: for those whose faith leads them to speak difficult truths and engage in difficult conversations with policymakers; for those who promote mercy over vengeance or retaliation. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

For those whose earthly journeys have ended, we give thanks. With (*names* and) all the saints, we praise you for the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Accept the prayers we bring, O God, on behalf of a world in need, for the sake of Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

OFFERING PRAYER

Extravagant God,
you have blessed us with the fullness of creation.

Now we gather at your feast
where you offer us the food that satisfies.

Take and use what we offer here, come among us,
and feed us with the body and blood of Christ,
in whose name we pray. **Amen.**

✦ GREAT THANKSGIVING

When our congregation gathered for the celebration of Holy Communion, we heard again the story of God's mighty acts and of the love shown us in the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

With thanksgiving we remembered that "in the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me. Again, after supper, he took the cup gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me."

The people of our congregation were given assurance of our Lord's presence through the gift of his Holy Spirit. Now we bring to you this same bread of life and this same cup of blessing, that you may be strengthened through your participation in the body of Christ.

Jesus said, "I am the bread of life, whoever comes to me shall never hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst."

At this time, you may remember the gift of holy communion with your own bread and cup.

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in His grace. Amen

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Blessed Jesus, in this rich meal of grace,
you have fed us with your body, the bread of life.
Now send us forth to bear your life-giving hope
to a world in need. **Amen.**

LAMB OF GOD

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;
grant us peace, grant us peace, Lamb of God.

BLESSING

You are children of God, anointed with the oil of gladness
and strengthened for the journey. Almighty God,
motherly, majestic, and mighty, † bless you this day and always. **Amen.**

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Jesus meets you on the way.
Thanks be to God.