



Reverend Carla E. Roland, PhD
Rector

September 15, 2020

Dear friends in Christ,

Grace and peace to all of you and your loved ones in the name of God. Happy St. Matthew's Day! (9/21). Last year in September I was on sabbatical, this year, as I write this letter, it has been six months since we have been with one another in person. A few of us, worshipped in the sanctuary this past Sunday for the first time; although the majority in attendance saw the service on Zoom, Facebook, or YouTube. In addition to worship in person, the Sunday Meals Program resumed on Sunday, August 30th. Two signs that we are entering into a new phase of our new normal at SMST: programs both in-person and online. This past Thursday was also my first day back from vacation. Thus, these past few days have been very eventful. You all have been ever present in my prayers and thoughts.

My heartfelt thanks to everyone who worked during my time away to make sure that worship continued, the Meal Program resumed, and that the day-to-day tasks at the church were managed.

David is in the Office generally Monday through Friday (1 to 6); Hilda is at the church Monday through Friday (9 to 5). Santana continues to offer programming online. Mother Carla will be at the church on Sundays and two other days during the week (Tuesday-Wednesday or Wednesday-Thursday, depending on in-person needs at the church).

We invite folks to come back to church, also asking that if you are vulnerable to Covid19 or do not feel well to stay at home. We are doing everything possible to keep folks safe in-person; please also do your part to stay safe.

With a new beginning and beginning of a new program year, our schedule is also changing:

- Sundays at 10 a.m. Worship in-person and online
 - September 20th – St. Matthew's Day!!!
- Sundays at 2 p.m. Sunday Meals Program (Cooking Team 10-1:30; Distribution Team 1:30-3 p.m.) – in-person. The meal is to go.
- Tuesdays at 5:30 p.m. SMST SQUAD (online) – resumes on 9/22
- Wednesdays at 6:15 p.m. For the Bible Tells Me So – Intergenerational Bible Study and Conversation – resumes 9/16
- The next Vestry Meeting will be Tuesday, September 22 at 7 p.m.

During this new stage, although we have in-person worship, we will not offer coffee hour in-person, only through Zoom after the service – we may not offer in-person coffee hour until the spring, and may do so in the backyard for better ventilation and social distancing.

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Also, remember that ventilation is very important, our AC unit is not on, we are keeping doors open and fans on in the church, dress accordingly.

As a reminder,

- Worship is available in-person, through Zoom, Facebook, or YouTube at 10 am..
 - On our Facebook Page SMSTChurch www.facebook.com/smstchurch/live
 - On our YouTube Page (live tab)
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCxn3nXo7nvo4xfhjK9xLnUA>
 - On Zoom
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88045352307?pwd=UG9lUVlXb2dYNGhRV21ycjIHRlVtZz09>
 - The condensed Zoom information is Meeting ID: 880 4535 2307 with Password: 470534
 - From a landline call +1 646 558 8656 US (New York) and enter the Meeting ID: 880 4535 2307 with Password: 470534
 - Instructions on how to call by zoom are at the bottom of this letter.
 - You can join the worship at any time during the Zoom call.
 - On YouTube and Facebook worship remains uploaded to be watched at other times.
- Coffee Hour follows **immediately** after the service on Zoom (same log-in information as worship).
- With hybrid worship, the format is changing to a more familiar Eucharistic format. By Wednesday each week we will mail the readings and prayers for the upcoming Sunday, so that folks can have as a resource. We will offer this resource through email and will mail to those that we know do not have access to email. We hope that this will allow some of our parishioners to be able to call-in to Zoom and participate in worship.
- Stay tuned for more information on:
 - Faith conversations on Thursday via Zoom
 - SMST Pen Pals for Love
 - We will look to have conversations on intentionally being an anti-racist congregation, working against narratives of anti-blackness, and living fully into our baptism.

Are you getting the weekly e-newsletter? If not, please let Mo. Carla know your email to sign you up. This has all the links to the Zoom gatherings and other social media. This email also has our most recent prayer list.

- Do you want to be part of a WhatsApp group? Let Mo. Carla know

I continue to be deeply grateful for each of you caring for one another, keeping in touch and holding others in prayer.

Even as some of us will have communion in person, we continue to Feast on the Word of God. As I shared in previous letters, historically, there have been many occasions when people have not been able to partake of communion. The *Armed Services Prayer Book* of the Episcopal Church offer this prayer:

In union, O Lord, with your faithful people at every altar of your Church, where the Holy Eucharist is now being celebrated, I desire to offer to you praise and thanksgiving. I remember your death, Lord Christ; I proclaim your resurrection; I await your coming in glory. Since I cannot receive you today in the Sacrament of your Body and Blood, I beseech you to come spiritually into my heart. Cleanse and strengthen me with

your grace, Lord Jesus, and let me never be separated from you. May I live in you, and you in me, in this life and in the life to come. Amen.

As conditions permit, other programs, groups, and tenants may begin using the church facilities. I am working along with the staff, working groups, and leadership of the church to develop plans that will help us most effectively use our facilities and serve the community, while safeguarding the health of all who use our facilities and sanctuary. To summarize:

Sunday Meals Program

- Resumed August 30
- There are safety protocols for all volunteers, guests and staff. These include temperature checks for volunteers and sign-ins for contact tracing
- Volunteers needed to help prepare and package hot meals for distribution by a separate team.

Other programs/tenants/persons entering the building

- We will require all that enter our facilities to wear masks.
- Folks entering the building need to sign-in and get temperature checks.
- We will provide clean spaces and bathrooms for the use of each group. Bathrooms will be properly stocked.
- We will ask each program/group to provide their own masks and hand sanitizer.
- Each long-term renter will ensure the appropriate social distancing in their spaces.
- The maximum size of any group will be determined by the safest configuration that allows for social distancing, and by the capacity allowed by law. The lowest number will be upheld.
- For administrative tenants, we will ask that they wear masks in common spaces and to receive the public in their offices. Each person will be responsible for keeping their desk and other personal items clean.
- For the tutoring center, the space will be cleaned every night; they are responsible for cleaning tutoring desks and computers between users, as well as other common surfaces.

As I shared before, here is an outline of all the things that we are considering and are already actively working on for when we do see each other again in church.

In-person worship:

- Masks will be required for all worshippers, clergy, and staff. We will aim to provide masks to those who do not have them.
- We will have hand sanitizer available and encourage folks to wash their hands often.
- For social distancing, seating will be distributed along the entire sanctuary with only related persons being able to seat together. My sense is that the maximum capacity for worship will be of 50 persons, and this uses all pews, including the balcony and behind the altar. The legal capacity is no more than 33% of occupancy or social distancing – whichever is lower.
- Hugs and handshakes will not be allowed and will be strongly discouraged.
- Each person will pick up their own bulletin.
- All books will be removed from the pews.
- The offering will be collected in a single (stationary) location.

- Communion will be offered only in the form of bread. Each person will come forward while keeping their mask on, pick up a wafer from a table, take the wafer back to their seat and then consume.
- We have not yet concluded what to do about congregational singing and the choir.
- The sermon will be offered from a fixed location and readers will read from various separate locations.
- Even while returning to the sanctuary, we will continue offering worship via Facebook and YouTube.
- We will need help with running all the technology needed for the recording and streaming of worship.
- We will have fans for greater air circulation in the sanctuary – and may initially not have A/C given that the Cooling Tower is currently shut off.
- We will keep an attendance for in-person worship in case any contact tracing becomes necessary.
- Initially we will not gather for a coffee hour after worship, and the kitchen will be off-limits. We ask that only one person be in the bathroom areas at one time.
- We ask folks who are at risk to stay home; we ask folks who do not feel well to also stay at home.
- After Sunday worship the sanctuary will be thoroughly cleaned and will be closed to visitors until the following Sunday.

This and many other things are being diligently worked on. Please let us know how you are. I look forward to hearing from you and to seeing you soon.

Blessings, *Mo. Carla*

Calling into zoom from a land line:

Sunday Worship

Dial +1 646 558 8656 US (New York)

It will ask for a Meeting ID: 880 4535 2307 followed by the “#” pound/hashtag

It will ask for a Password: 470534 followed by the “#” pound/hashtag

SMST Squad

Dial +1 646 558 8656 US (New York)

It will ask for a Meeting ID: 835 2205 3672 followed by the “#” pound/hashtag

It will ask for a Password: 032358 followed by the “#” pound/hashtag

Wednesday Bible Study

Dial +1 646 558 8656 US (New York)

It will ask for a Meeting ID: 852 0999 4642 followed by the “#” pound/hashtag

It will ask for a Password: 706030 followed by the “#” pound/hashtag