



“Hybrid” worship begins May 2

This coming **Sunday, May 2 at 9:00 AM**, and for *all the Sundays in May*, St. Lawrence Church will be piloting a hybrid, both in-person and Zoom, service.

As we move cautiously into in-person worship, the Outdoor Worship team has had three priorities: **Keep it safe. Keep it simple. Keep it portable.**

Why hybrid? We realize that many St. Lawrence parishioners have been eagerly awaiting a chance to praise God in person and to receive communion, while at the same time, nearly half of our congregants still wish to worship on Zoom for now.

You can choose to:

- Come in person to a simple outdoor Eucharist.
- Attend the service on Zoom live-streamed from a designated parishioner’s phone.

Why now? The weather is improving, more people are being vaccinated, and new guidelines by public health experts point to lower risk for outdoor activities.

What restrictions will we observe at outdoor Eucharist? The most recent guidance of the diocese and the state calls for **mask-wearing, social distancing**, and limiting gatherings to no more than 100 people. We are allowed **one masked singer** (or covered wind instrument), and **distribute only communion hosts** (regular or gluten-free).

How will I know where to show up? The **Thursday weekly St. Lawrence eBlast** “Together Connected” will note the upcoming Sunday’s location, including where to park. We’d like to take a simple, “pop-up” Eucharist somewhere (a parking lot, a park, a field, or even a big back yard) in Libertyville, Vernon Hills, or Mundelein.

What should I bring? Please bring your own **folding chair(s) or picnic blanket**. The service will be shorter than usual, at least at first, and will not have paper bulletins.

What will seating look like? For the time being, **households will sit together, physically distanced** from other households. “Distancing Ambassadors” will help direct people to safe spots to set up their household’s chair or blanket.

How will we celebrate in-person Eucharist? The priest will safely distribute hosts (both regular and gluten-free) at a safe distance. At this point, the priest will not communicate with wine.

What will the end of the service look like? When the Eucharist ends, you might continue fellowship with others by **taking walks** or **pulling your chairs into socially distanced small groups** outdoors. **Leave your mask on**, and please **don't bring food or drink**. Many may choose to **depart without socializing**.

What happens if the weather is bad? We will pivot to **Zoom**, and worship as we have been doing for many months. Please watch your **email** box for messages from St. Lawrence on **Sunday morning** before you head out of your house. We will post a change in plans **by 8:00 AM**. In dry weather (even hot or cold), we will plan for outdoor worship. We expect that people will **dress casually**.

Can I bring children? Of course! **Children are welcome** at outdoor worship. **Everyone over the age of 2 must wear a face covering**. We will offer ziplock bags with children's Sunday Papers and some crayons, so you might bring a clipboard or a hard-cover book so your child/children have a hard surface to color on. Adults in household groups should **monitor their children's social distancing** from others.

What if I'm not ready to worship in person? You're not alone. You can log on to **Zoom at 9:00 AM**, as you have been doing for many months. You'll be attending a **live-stream of the outdoor service**. When the in-person people receive communion, those on Zoom will offer the prayer for Spiritual Communion. At the end of the service, all those who have attended church on Zoom will have time to talk with one another.

When will indoor worship begin? The Reopening Task Force is meeting to begin to plan for indoor worship in a **Phase 2 of reopening**. There's not a clear timeline yet, so stay tuned. Meanwhile, several of our neighboring Episcopal churches are trying some things with indoor worship, and if you go, **please bring back ideas** for St. Lawrence for safe indoor worship in the coming months.

Anything else? Yes. **Please be patient** with yourself and with one another. We are all adjusting to the changing pandemic situation in different ways and at different paces. Second, please **stay flexible** as we try some various methods and locations. Finally, please remember that this format is **just for the month of May** and won't last forever! **The most important thing is to worship God.**

We'll be learning as we go, so keep these efforts in your prayers.

Grace and peace to you, Daphne Cody+