



# *the* EPISCOPAL DIOCESE *of* UPPER SOUTH CAROLINA

## **A Clergy Guide to General Worship Practices and to Holy Week 2020 during the COVID-19 Pandemic**

Brothers and Sisters,

You are in my prayers daily during this preparation time filled with re-configurations, improvisations and inspirations. Every one of you with whom I've spoken is doing remarkable, faithful, and expert work and I am filled with gratitude for you. Because time is short on so many counts, I want to make this guidance as simple and clear as possible. All general guidance here will be regularly reviewed. I hope to have a Pastoral Letter for you in the next day or so, but wanted to get this to you as quickly as possible.

+Andrew Waldo

### **General Worship Guidance:**

- Limit presence in your main sanctuaries to 3 people for all worship services, except as noted below.
- **In small chapels**, limit is 2 people.
- **Exception: For Palm Sunday and Easter Vigil/Day only, in large sanctuaries, the limit is 5 people. In small sanctuaries, the limit of 3 people remains.** I trust you to decide whether your sanctuary is "large" or "small," I just ask that you be honest with yourself and the people whom you serve relative to strict safety needs in this pandemic.
- In sacristies/vesting/flower rooms, limit is 1 person at a time, at any and all times
- ***In all cases***, physical distancing—6+’ apart at all times—must be *strictly (Please.)* observed, even when simply walking past someone in the liturgy or through hallways.
- *Asperges* not permitted in any liturgy
- Baptisms, weddings and funerals will need to be postponed until further notice.

## **General Worship Guidance (continued):**

### **Eucharist/Communion**

Because practice and tradition vary so much across the Diocese, whether or not to celebrate Eucharist will, for now, be at the Rector/Priest-in-Charge's discretion, ***subject to the following:***

#### **Services with Eucharist:**

- *At least two persons* must receive Communion – in one kind only for any persons other than the Celebrant; solo consumption not permitted
- Celebrant may only physically touch bread that he or she will consume (*e.g.*, the entire, broken host wafer); anyone else receiving must come to altar, observing physical distance, and take his/her own wafer;
- While the altar party is receiving Communion, those viewing a streamed or recorded service at home may participate ("Communion by Intention," a.k.a., "spiritual Communion") by reciting the following prayer from the Armed Services Prayer Book (update with modern pronouns, as you wish)

*In union, O Lord, with the faithful at every altar of Thy church where the Holy Eucharist is now being celebrated, I desire to offer Thee praise and thanksgiving. I present to Thee my soul and body with the earnest wish that they may always be united to Thee. I remember Thy death, Lord Christ; I proclaim Thy resurrection; I await Thy coming in glory. And since I cannot now receive Thee sacramentally, I beseech Thee to come spiritually into my heart. I unite myself to Thee, and embrace Thee with all the affections of my soul. Let nothing ever separate Thee from me. May I live and die in Thy love. Amen.*

#### **Not permitted:**

- "Drive-by" or "Go bag" administration of the sacraments is not permitted
- Delivery of sacraments to persons in their homes, in cars, or in care facilities, including hospitals, is not permitted, including by Eucharistic Visitors

## **Holy Week Worship Guidance:**

- While Holy Week this year will be a new experience, it cannot be postponed to a later date, when we can re-gather.
- A few of our smaller congregations have initiated "drive-up" services, for which participants park their cars, stay in them, and listen to the service using technology in their car or in their pockets. This seems like a good idea as long as no one gets out of their cars to mingle, or mingles across narrow spaces between cars through open windows.
- A few other congregations are equipping parishioners with resources and teaching materials that will allow them to observe and celebrate the essence of these profound days in their homes.
- Whether you are observing through Holy Eucharist or the use of an Office, use the Lections appointed for Proper Liturgies, where there is one, not the Daily Office lections appointed for those days. For Monday-Wednesday in Holy Week, follow the normal Office Lectionary.

### **Palm Sunday**

- Bless, but do not distribute, palms including drive-by distribution. There have been several good and creative ideas about this, but the task force I convened and I decided safety takes precedence.

**With Eucharist**, proceed as in Proper Liturgy, observing above Eucharistic protocols  
**Without Eucharist**, follow Proper Liturgy through Passion Gospel and Sermon.  
Include Prayers of the People, Lord's Prayer (before or after Prayers, your choice),  
Prayer over the People for Palm Sunday (BOS) and Dismissal.

### **Maundy Thursday**

- **Foot washing not permitted.** *Option:* Priests may, however, encourage families already sheltering in place and living in the same dwelling, to wash each other's feet at home during this liturgy
- Participants *may*, as an act of servanthood in time of pandemic, ritually wash their *own* hands (with separate bowls for each, or a single act of the Celebrant/Officiant). The usual anthems may be said or sung during this action.
- **With Eucharist**, proceed as in Proper Liturgy, observing above Eucharistic protocols
- **Without Eucharist, but with Stripping of the Altar:** As a way of visually reminding observers of the Last Supper, the altar may be set simply, with corporal, chalice and paten—both empty—prior to the liturgy, and then removed as part of the stripping of the altar.

## Holy Week Worship Guidance (continued):

### Good Friday

- The Proper Liturgy with Solemn Collects, with or without veneration of the Cross, with or without Communion from the Reserved Sacrament may be observed. However, Communion may be in one kind only for all participants, from bread that has not been physically touched by anyone, and must be self-administered by participants, and may not be delivered to home-bound persons.
- The Stations of the Cross may be offered instead.

### Holy Saturday

- May be performed exactly as presented in the Proper Liturgy!

### Easter Vigil/Easter Day

- **With Eucharist**, full or rubrically abbreviated Vigil permitted, using physical distancing and Eucharistic protocols, above. Bells ringing at the Vigil or during a *Gloria in excelsis* on Easter Day are likely to be deeply welcomed!
- **NO Baptisms** during pandemic; Renewal of Vows only (again, with no Asperges)
- Easter flowers will be welcome, too! They need to be arranged by one person only, or two, if they are strictly working in different parts of the church

**And let the *Alleluias* ring out!**