



**THE CHURCH OF
THE HOLY TRINITY**
RITTENHOUSE SQUARE

The Lord Himself goes before you and will be with you;

He will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.

(Deuteronomy 31:8)

May 20, 2020

Dear Friends:

We greet you in Christ's name in the ninth week since the churches in our area closed. During that time, you have all demonstrated great adaptability and resilience. Through all of the online worship, social and educational zoom gatherings, feeding and clothing ministries, and building maintenance, we have been both proud and comforted to be your priests.

Starting with the decision to close in Mid-March, your clergy and vestry decided to operate under the guidance and authority of our Bishop and local government officials. We have been faithful in our disciplined isolation from one another, in order to show love to our neighbor. In the coming weeks, we may begin the transition toward reentry into live worship. This will be a slow return to the things we missed (gathering, singing, embracing, receiving communion), and we will add each piece when it is safe to do so. The path back to physical gathering will be measured and deliberate.

Your clergy and vestry have been meeting to develop a plan to bring us back together. We have also been meeting with our Bishop, who has, in turn, been speaking with other Bishops, state and city authorities, and the CDC. The Bishop has just released his guidelines for churches in our Diocese to resume in-person worship; we will follow these guidelines as we refine our own plan and prepare to release it to you. You can read the Bishop's guidelines [here](#).

The Bishop has given each church the directive to develop our own plan within his guidelines. The difference in worship space, community context, congregational demographics, and parish ministries all mean that each church's return will look different and have a unique timeline. Your clergy and vestry will place health and safety as the top priority. The Vestry and clergy have been studying the Bishop's guidelines, and will meet again next week to continue their planning. As soon as we have developed a plan, and it has been approved by the Bishop, we will communicate it with you. We have committed to continued online worship for the foreseeable future, as we know there will be many who will want to or need to stay home. Through all of this, we will keep Christ at the center of our decisions, relying on our faith, prayer, and the love of our neighbor.

It has taken adjustment, learning, faith, sacrifice and discipline to make our way through these last nine weeks. We are blessed by your generosity and dedication throughout it all. We will continue to rely on God as we move ahead and will be faithful to communicate with you about the next steps toward that joyful day when we can be together in the body as well as the Spirit.

Yours in Christ,

The Revs. John and Rachel Gardner, Rectors

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