

ABOUT HEALTH AND SAFETY

1. What precautions are being taken to make sure the space is clean?

After each service, all surfaces are disinfected. The pew cushions, prayer books, and hymnals have been removed. Attendees are asked to wear masks. Worship leaders and ushers will be wearing masks.

2. What precautions are being taken to ensure social distancing during church?

We are limiting our congregation to 32 households. To attend, one must sign up beforehand. Each household will have two empty pews to the front and back. Households will be seated on the outside of each pew.



3. I'm not ready to come back. Will you continue offering worship opportunities on livestream?

We will continue to offer live-streaming of our worship services on Facebook and YouTube indefinitely. We know returning isn't for everyone! We hope you'll still choose to worship with us from your home.

4. I want to come back, but I'm worried I won't be able to get a spot. Or I tried signing up but the service was full.

Please continue trying by signing up on the Sign-up Genius link that we will email to you. We will constantly evaluate the number of services needed to meet the demand for in-person worship *while maintaining all of the above precautions*. If we see a sufficient number of folks unable to worship in-person who wish to, we'll add services at other times -- but we need to know you're interested! If you have any issues signing up, contact [Robyn Banks](#) or [Ebet Peeples](#).

5. I've heard singing is particularly likely to spread the virus. What are you doing about this?

Under the [direction of our bishop](#) and the [CDC guidelines](#), there will be no congregational singing for the foreseeable future. Two singers will be present to offer music in the chancel at a safe distance of 10' from the nearest person. Our air circulation will also be turned off for the duration of the service.

6. Who is making these decisions about Calvary's opening?

From the beginning of the pandemic, we have followed the CDC's recommendations along with seeking the direction of the medical expertise in our community for our particular setting at Calvary. Our Return to Calvary Committee consists of Physicians: Dr. Jim Bailey, Dr. Betty Jo Dulaney, Dr. Henry Sullivan, Dr. Edwin Thorpe; Wardens: Kim Kitterman, James Aldinger; Staff: Steve Smith (Finance & Operations), Helario Reyna (Facilities Mgr.), Robyn Banks (Communications), Ebet Peeples (Welcome & Community), Scott Walters (Rector).

7. Are you certain this is the right decision? What's the rush?

No rush here. We're following the CDC guidelines, the advice of a team of infectious disease experts from our local Baptist health system, the continued guidance of medical experts in our community, and direction from our bishop. Locally, we're moving more slowly than the Phase 2 allowances given to us from Shelby County and we've done so with stricter measures than called for; e.g., the 32 households we're allowing are far fewer than 25% of Calvary's capacity.

None of our plans are set in stone. With any change in the data or the above guidance, we will change our course accordingly. "Certainty" is elusive in the best of times (and Episcopalians tend to appreciate this better than most), but we're acting as carefully and prayerfully as we can.

We want to be faithful to both those who wish to return and those who don't. If you feel rushed, we hope you'll honor that feeling and continue to worship online until you feel ready to return to in-person worship. We also hope you'll extend grace rather than judgment to your neighbor who is ready to return.

ABOUT THE SERVICE

8. Why are we holding a service of Morning Prayer rather than Holy Eucharist?

Morning Prayer is a service frequently held on Sundays by the Episcopal Church until the 1979 Prayer Book, which emphasized Holy Eucharist as the central act of a worshipping community. It will be familiar to most folks of a certain age who grew up in the Episcopal Church.

To those who have joined since 1979, Morning Prayer will likely be a new experience. It consists of some of the same patterns as Holy Eucharist: a series of readings, prayers, and hymns, along with a sermon to reflect on the readings. It does not transition to the sacrament of the Table.

Your clergy at Calvary can't imagine a way to celebrate Eucharist and safely distribute the elements to participants. We are also holding in mind that a great many of our congregants will continue worshiping online and will have no access to the sacrament for some time.

Morning Prayer will continue as we make our way through the phases of reopening. It is a good and veritable service in its own right, worthy of practice as it focuses us on the sacrament of the Word. We know this is temporary and that we have lessons to learn from this renewed practice. But moreover, by pausing on the Eucharist, we honor our fundamental belief that a table to which only a special, favored few are invited is no Eucharistic table at all.

9. Why does the service feel so Lenten-y?

The somber, muted feeling you're experiencing likely has to do with the complete absence of a congregation, only two members of a choir leading the music, and the fact that you are viewing it through a screen.

10. Why are the priests wearing black?

The priests are wearing cassocks and surplices, as they normally do when not acting as the Celebrant of the Eucharist (that person would typically wear a cassock-alb and a large, decoratively patterned frock called a "chasuble.") The black scarf they wear is not a stole, but a "tippet." Tippetts are worn by clergy leading the Daily Office, which we're doing now with Morning Prayer. They're a symbol of the priestly office and not at all connected with seasonal colors, though they can sometimes be adorned with the insignia of the wearer's seminary or of the Episcopal Church.

11. Why doesn't the altar have flowers?

To keep as few people as possible from moving through our officially closed building, we suspended the flower arrangements for a time. They'll come back soon.

12. In the survey I filled out, I noticed the potential worship times were changed. Why?

Like all of these differences, our changed times reflect the reality that times have changed. Calvary normally has an average Sunday attendance of 300, with the overwhelming majority attending the 10:00 a.m. service. We want to prioritize giving everyone a chance to worship in-person if they choose with only 32 households for seating per service. This will likely mean two services on either side of the “normal” hour of most worshippers: 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. We will continue to evaluate the need for additional services when sign-ups exceed the capacity we have.