



Episcopal Diocese of West Virginia

The Rt. Rev. W. Michie Klusmeyer
Bishop
1608 Virginia Street, East
Charleston, West Virginia 25311
Mailing Address:
PO Box 5400
Charleston, West Virginia 25361

24 June 2021

The Feast of the Nativity of St John the Baptist

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As we celebrate the Nativity of St John the Baptist, we are reminded of his ascetical lifestyle in the desert, away from the throngs of people. His isolation and reclusive nature added to his own spiritual life.

For the past 16 months, we too have been living a life removed from the gathering crowds that we had acknowledged as normative. Our gatherings have been limited, and our faces have been covered. Seeking a smile from someone close by was difficult, if not impossible.

The difficult decisions that I, and others, have made have been for the safeguarding of all of God's People. I am happy to say that as of this date, while some Episcopalians have suffered from Coronavirus, there has been no evidence of transmission from our various communities in West Virginia!

With God's Grace and the medical wisdom of those entrusted with oversight, we can see that the Virus appears to be on the decline. While it is not eradicated, it is declined to a level where we can appear to resume more normal activities.

Others around us have moved a bit more quickly, and that's all right. Some around us are more ready to jump back in with both feet, and others are more hesitant. Both are acceptable responses.

As God has made us to be incarnational people, and the Church is the Corporal Body of Christ on earth, we are people who need to be together. Electronic life is no easy substitute for who God is truly calling us to be. We have missed being together.

So, as of this day, I am lifting most of the restrictions by which we have governed ourselves in our Church buildings.

If you are fully vaccinated, masks are no longer required!

If you have not been fully vaccinated, I ask you to consider a mask out of consideration for others, though it will not be required.

Phone: 304-344-3597
Toll-free: 866-549-8346
Fax: 304-343-3295
www.wvdiocese.org

For a little while longer, I ask for a 'restrained' passing of the Peace in Church on Sundays.

For a little while longer, we will continue to offer Holy Eucharist by Bread alone. The Chalice will still be reserved for the Celebrant alone.

If for any reason you do not feel well, please stay home.

If you do not feel comfortable returning to Church, please wear a mask or continue to join us online.

If you have not already been vaccinated, please get vaccinated!

I am asking every parish to set aside a space within the Nave, in which people may still self-distance, if they wish. Others may return to the pews they have missed for so long. (Yes, you may even return to "YOUR" pew! Or in some cases, your ancestors' pew.)

Singing, which was permitted a few weeks ago, may continue.

Please continue to pray for all those who are sick, and for those who have departed this life due to Coronavirus.

As the Collect for John the Baptist states in part, "may we follow his example, constantly speaking the truth, boldly rebuking vice, and patiently suffering for the truth's sake; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen."

We have suffered, and now we are called to boldly proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ, the healer and reconciler.

Peace to you all.

Fondly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "W. Michie Klugmeyer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

The Rt. Rev. W. Michie Klugmeyer
Bishop of West Virginia