



Community Covenant: A Season for Sacrificial Love

For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven. Ecclesiastes 3:1

The season for entering our churches for small gatherings and worship is approaching. It will not happen in all places across Colorado at one time, but instead at different times and in different ways based on our multiple and widely varying contexts and rate of infections, hospitalizations, and deaths. These stark realities bring many questions.

How will we enter this new season? When can we return to the way things were before? If we test positive for the virus, what we will do?

This time of pandemic is like no other season in our lifetimes. We are being called to act in unfamiliar ways, staying home, distancing ourselves from others, wearing protective masks when we are in public places, and disclosing when we have been exposed to the virus. At first these new behaviors seem to fly in the face of our beliefs, yet upon deeper reflection, our actions can reflect the core values and beliefs of our Christian faith.

The Covenant we make at baptism expresses what it means to follow Christ and what it means to be a Christian. In the midst of these promises, we commit to live faithfully both inside and outside the church walls, seeking to serve all persons in Christian love:

Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself?
I will, with God's help.

This will be a season that requires establishing and committing to a new covenant for each of our communities as we gather again in person. It is critical that clergy, parish leaders and community members all commit to a covenant that will demonstrate Christian love and care and provide for the health and safety of every person.

We covenant in community to take these selfless actions:

- We will wash our hands carefully and fully.
- We will enter our spaces with care and intention.
- We will keep the recommended safe distance from others.
- We will wear masks.
- If we test positive, we will not enter upon the church property for any reason and will disclose our test result to our clergy or parish leader so the church can provide assistance with quarantine, medical attention and take steps for the safety of the community.
- If a member of our household or family tests positive, or if we believe that we have been exposed to the virus, we will not enter upon the church property for any reason for at least 14 days
- We will assist with compassionate contact tracing.

For us as Christians, washing our hands and wearing masks becomes acts of care and devotion. Our masks provide only limited protection to us, but much protection to others if we are unknowing asymptomatic carriers. In doing this, we are required to acknowledge two truths. First, that we live in community and Jesus commands love for our neighbor, sometimes above ourselves. Second, that we are not invulnerable and that "To dust we shall return." Our ultimate hope lies in God.

As we consider how we will gather together in person again, we realize our gathering will necessarily look different than it did before this season of pandemic. We now must remember and take care to protect every person present as well as everyone with whom they will have contact. There is no shame when we act from selfless love. We will do this out of the abundance of our Christian love and service as we commit ourselves to this community covenant.