

Dear People of Ascension,

February 2021

Most of you will have spoken with a church warden on the phone about the motion being brought to vestry regarding replacing the pews in our church with chairs. Hopefully you have also taken some time to look at the information about the chairs we proposing we purchase (<https://www.ascensionportperry.com/blog/proposal-to-replace-pews-with-chairs-in-sanctuary>).

And I suspect, that most of you have made up your minds about whether or not this is a good idea. I can certainly appreciate that for some it is not their first choice and for a variety of reasons. I am grateful to the wardens for taking the time, back in June last year, and again in recent days, to reach out to the parish and to “listen” to what people were thinking and feeling. This was an important step in discerning whether to proceed at this time or not.

A number of excellent points were raised during these conversations and the following pages (all five of them!) address many of these questions and concerns. Though the majority of people we’ve spoken with are in support of this motion, we know that some are not and we want to be sure that everyone is heard, that different points of view are considered.

I won’t address here what the following pages speak to. I will say, though, for those of you who think this is not a good time, I would suggest that there is likely not going to be a “good time” to make this decision for a very long while yet. And yet, this is a good time to move forward with initiatives that allow us to grow and develop as a community. Along with the Sunday worship that we all know and love and cannot wait to get back to, I am looking forward to starting a service for young families as soon as feasible. Wouldn’t it be lovely to welcome them into a church that was designed with them in mind.

That said, I do not underestimate the grief many of us feel as we see the things we’ve known, loved and cherished for all of our lives become things of the past. It is hard and heart-breaking. There is no getting around that. Please know that the hard parts of this decision are not overlooked.

Along with the wardens, I simply ask the following of each of you before you vote at Vestry:

1. Take some time to carefully consider all the material offered around this proposal.
2. Pray.
3. Make your decision about how to vote, not on how you personally feel about chairs vs. pews, but according to what you believe the Spirit of God is calling us to as Church of the Ascension at this time.

Whether we replace the pews or not, we will continue to worship together, learn and grow together, and find all the ways possible to love each other and our neighbours.

And that is good news!

With Peace & Prayers, Ruthanne