



# Return and Renewal Project

## Information Sheet

### What We Have Learned

At the beginning of 2020, there were very few parishes in the Episcopal Church that were live streaming their worship on a weekly basis. Many churches, like Atonement, made efforts to record sermons or anthems for those who could not attend worship in person, but few of us had the infrastructure for regular, high-quality, online worship. All of that changed in March. Overnight, we were all thrown into the deep end of the online streaming pool. The onset of COVID-19 forced all of us to learn how to continue to worship together as a community online. We learned how to use Zoom for worship, and we saw how this technology could help us to remain connected as a parish during this unpredictable year.

What we have also learned is just how valuable it is for us to provide for online worship. We have seen how powerfully our proclamation of the Gospel can extend far beyond our four walls. Even as we begin to reopen for in-person

worship once again, we can easily see how streaming our liturgies will help to keep everyone connected to the parish both in this time of pandemic and in the future. Those who are not yet comfortable with returning to the building are able to continue attending. Additionally, those in the hospital or the homebound are now able to attend Sunday morning with us for the first time. Indeed, we have had new parishioners join our community from near and far without ever setting foot in our physical building.

In our year with Zoom, we have learned a lot. We've learned what works for virtual liturgies – *and what doesn't*. We have learned that while Zoom has been a lifesaver for us this year, it is designed to be a video conferencing platform, *not a streaming service*. The way in which we stream over Zoom would present enormous challenges when we reopen the 11:00 am Mass for an in-person congregation. The continued prevalence of “Zoom-bombing” prevents us from widely publicizing the login information for any of our Zoom worship, restricting it to only those closely associated with the parish. The limitations of video and sound quality, as well as our limited ability to show to the full chancel or nave, or the full beauty of Atonement's singularly beautiful liturgical practice, have continued to frustrate.

## Opportunities for Ministry and Outreach

There is an enormous and exciting new ministry and outreach opportunity in developing a method for streaming our liturgy long term. With new technology and a new platform, we will be able to expand the reach of Atonement throughout the country and the world. The liturgy, preaching, and music for which we are known locally will find a broader audience and expand our outreach efforts within our neighborhood and beyond.

## How Will This Come Together?

To livestream in a sustainable way there are certain considerations that must be made to the space:

1. The streaming technology must be unobtrusive so as not to limit the view of parishioners upon their return.
2. It must provide an immersive experience to those viewing from home.
3. Our streaming system must enhance the worship experience of all.
4. The streaming must fully represent Atonement to the world.

To achieve this, three cameras will be installed in the church – two will be placed in the rear gallery of the church and one will be placed near the crossing. Each camera has a 20x zoom which will allow for both close-up and wide-angle shots throughout the nave and chancel. We will also have views of the pulpit, lectern, altar, Baptismal font, Marian Shrine, as well as liturgical processions and the congregation. The installation of this technology will allow us to broadcast high-quality, beautiful liturgy around the world not just in the short-term, but for all future worship as well. This project is a permanent evangelism tool, spreading the good news of God's saving love around the world.

The implementation of this new plan will necessitate a move from Zoom to YouTube. We are planning on making this switch by mid-Lent. This move will, of course, be an adjustment, but it is one worth making. The benefits of easy accessibility for all and the enormous impact on our attendance are clear in last year's Christmas Eve Mass, which was streamed on YouTube and Facebook Live... *and which reached more than 1,000 people!*

The Return and Renewal Project team, along with the vestry, will do all we can to communicate information about this change to make the transition as smooth as possible.

## How Can I Access Online Worship?

There are several things you can do to help you access this important information.

- **First**, you can sign up for our weekly parish email by contacting [office@atonementchicago.org](mailto:office@atonementchicago.org)
- **Second**, you can also go to Atonement's YouTube page ([atonementchicago](#)), subscribe to our channel, and turn on notifications. This will enable you to get updates when Atonement's liturgies go live. And,
- **Third**, you can also bookmark the Atonement website, where under "Worship" you will find the ["Leaflets and Resources" page](#), where we will be posting the weekly leaflet in a PDF format.

The Return and Renewal Project team is excited to bring higher quality video and audio to you, and to bring Atonement to the broader world in an accessible and sustainable way. This new ministry is an exciting and proud moment in our parish.

## Questions?

If you have questions about this upcoming project, please contact us by emailing [feedback@atonementchicago.org](mailto:feedback@atonementchicago.org)