



## Pathways to Worship

First Sunday of Each Month at 10:00AM

We are modifying this worship service to better accommodate neurodiverse parishioners with sensory issues, in order to create a more relaxed and friendly place of worship. On the first Sunday of the month, St. Barnabas is committed to serving the needs of our neurodiverse members, including those with autism, while also cultivating compassion and understanding among our neurotypical members and visitors. Through the guidance of the Holy Spirit and over time the goal is that all worshippers, regardless of abilities might feel fully valued as people of God, made deeply in God's image.

As we begin on this journey, we have made some adjustments to the format of the service leaflet to render it more user-friendly. Directions regarding when to sit or stand, and when to speak, have been amplified and the overall format has been somewhat simplified. Please note that this service leaflet is also available ahead of time via our weekly eNews for those who would like to preview and prepare for the church service (please fill out a welcome card, available at the welcome table, in the chapel and South transept pews for eNews sign up).

For neurodiverse people sensitive to sensory input, community participation can feel overwhelming. Thus, the physical arrangement of the service has been modified to render it more inclusive. We have designated both the chapel and the pews to the right of the altar (the south transept) as Pathways to Worship seating, to provide a calmer, "judgment-free" space that is somewhat removed from the central activity of the congregation and yet still very much part of worship. The singing and organ have been minimized to the extent consistent with the liturgy. Congregants who wish to avoid congregating with others may enter and exit through either the door behind the organ or the door off the right alcove, both of which lead out onto the front lawn. Congregants should feel free to step outside at any point as necessary for a sensory break. At the conclusion of the service, please remain seated for a moment to allow congregants wishing to leave ahead of the crowd to do so. Those with sensory issues are invited to leave after the Blessing and before the hymn and Dismissal.

For many special needs families, live events such as church worship can be stressful and intimidating. It is our hope that Pathways to Worship will be a joyful and relatively stress-free experience. Please let us know if you have any suggestions for additional accommodations to help reduce anxiety and promote a sensory-friendly spiritual experience.