

Welcome Home—St. Elizabeth Return to Church July 27 – 28, 2019

Some Notes about What to Expect as We Move Back Home

As we know from home remodeling projects, sometimes we receive the keys to move back into our remodeled space before all the details are fully finished. That's what we'll find as we move back into our church space the weekend of July 27 – 28.

And, like a home remodel, we'll find new improvements and finishing touches added and new details completed each weekend leading up to our Church Completion Celebration the weekend of September 7 and 8.

As with our move to the Gym, we will find opportunities to create new habits, to practice flexibility and patience, and to respond with joy.

Here are some features of note.

1. Parking and Entry—Use the Doors at 75th Street (SE Corner of Church)

For a few weeks, please enter church through the center and east doors on 75th Street. New doors for all entrances will be installed mid-August. All west doors are currently unavailable as entrances. The unavailable entries are the doors nearest the church parking lot and the westernmost door of the 3 entries into the Narthex (back of church).

If you park in the church parking lot, please walk or wheel from your car to the church doors either via 74th Terrace or via the walkway between the church and the school building. Parking is also available in the Parish Ministry Center lot, the Preschool lot east of the PMC lot, and on 75th Street.

Also, the main parking lot is contributing a number of parking spaces to construction. We probably need to expect that to remain “normal” until the new ECC is completed and open. So as you park, please leave spaces closest to the church entrance available to our community members who have mobility challenges. Those of us with more stable “shanks’ mares” can park a bit farther away and enjoy the view of progress as we take a few more steps to get into church.

Once the new doors have been installed we will all be able to enjoy the new stairs and accessible ramp to enter the church from the parking lot.

2. Narthex (aka “Back of Church”)—Gathering Space

As you enter the church from 75th and Main, you step into a noticeably larger gathering space, introduced to us by Fr. Greg several weeks ago as our “narthex.” In addition to more space, notice the large windows that mark the threshold between our gathering space and our worship space.

An artisan-carved main center door and wood doors on the west and east ends of the narthex have not yet been installed, so the narthex isn’t as soundproof as it will be after we finish those details.

The narthex has new lighting, fresh paint, and abundant natural light from the stained glass in the choir loft. If you look up, you’ll see the beautiful windows that will help to keep the narthex sounds from mingling with the music created in the choir loft.

Once completed, this space will also serve as our new cry room for our youngest worshipers and their grown-ups when they need a place to stretch their legs or lungs during Mass.

3. Church Space

As you step into the worship space, take some time to notice the beautifully repainted walls (alabaster with grey accents), the remounted Stations of the Cross, and the new accessible ramp and hand-wrought railing near the tabernacle. New accent lights in the sanctuary add warmth and beauty to the altar area.

For a few weeks, bless yourself with holy water from the familiar stands and bowls we used in the gym. We are waiting for the doors to be installed before holy water fonts are installed.

Also take a moment to look back to see the dramatically remodeled choir loft space.

4. Tabernacle—Back Home Again

Our tabernacle has returned to its previous location on the east side of the church. Take note of a newly added ramp that allows us to move from the main floor of the church to the top level of the sanctuary without climbing stairs. This significantly improves the accessibility of our worship space for all of our parishioners. We are consulting with the architect team on options to increase visibility of stairs and steps. If you do use the stairs, remember to watch your step carefully as you come down the stairs—it’s hard to see the change in depth sometimes.

5. Reconciliation Room—New Location

As part of the expansion of the narthex, we relocated the Reconciliation Room (aka the Confessional). You can find this space on the east side of the church, facing the tabernacle. This room provides a much quieter and more private space in which to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

6. Sacristies

Both sacristies have undergone significant renovation and repurposing.

6a. Presider's Sacristy – this is the sacristy on the east side of church, behind the tabernacle, formerly known as the “Servers’ Sacristy.” Now this sacristy contains the closet for the priests’ and deacons’ vestments and serves as a quiet, separate area in which Fr. Greg, Deacon Mike, and other presiders and deacons can have time and space to prepare for Liturgy. After vesting and preparing for prayer, presiders and deacons will join us in the Working Sacristy, the narthex, or the worship space.

6b. Working Sacristy – this is the sacristy on the west side of the church, behind the Mary “chapel”, formerly known as the “Sacristy”. This space contains closets for seasonal church decorations, new lighting, and new cabinetry for all of the vessels and linens that we use in our Liturgical prayer. All liturgical ministers check in here, and any details for the upcoming Liturgy can be talked through here. This sacristy is where sacristans prepare the bread, wine, water, and other material we use in Liturgy; where servers vest and check in; where Eucharistic Ministers meet to purify patens and chalices after Communion. This sacristy also needs to remain a place of quiet and reverence (sound carries), so we need to remember to use the narthex for our pre- and post-Liturgy conversations and fellowship.

7. Restrooms

We have the same restroom in the same location, in what we now call the narthex. Additional restrooms remain available going down the stairs in the narthex.

8. Work on Seton Hall and The Elevator!

Work continues in Seton Hall to update lighting and sound and to add finishing touches. The elevator that will provide access from the main floor to Seton Hall should be in place in late September. The exterior ramp to the elevator and to the walkway between the church and the school building is being detailed now with stone facade and provides a beautiful addition to the walkway.

Celebration on September 7 – 8

Please plan to join us on Saturday, September 7 or Sunday, September 8 for the Church Completion Celebration. There are plans for special moments in the Liturgies that weekend to help us celebrate our return from the gym to our dedicated worship space. After Mass we will have an opportunity to visit the new features above and learn more about each of them. Volunteers will also be available at designated stations to provide additional details and answer questions.

Welcome Back Home, St. Elizabeth Community!