

**Saint Stephen's Episcopal Church**  
**Waretown, NJ 08087**

**Re-Opening With Care Plan Amid COVID-19 Pandemic**

Overview. Church Lay Leadership has participated in Lay Leadership Meetings, viewed training videos, read reports by the RRR Task Force, monitored information provided by the Diocese, the State of NJ and by from the CDC Website. We also conducted an electronic survey of parishioners (EXHIBIT A). Anyone having a cognizant role in this Plan will be fully trained on the procedures under their cognizance.

That which follows is our initial reopening plan. We are fully committed to abide by our plan and also understand that our plan must be monitored and adjusted as guidelines are modified and as circumstances warrant. Any changes not promulgated or sanctioned by the Diocese of NJ will be submitted for review and approval.

**1. Worship Services: Our protocol calls for two services.**

1.1 Service #1 Indoor in the Church

1.1.1 Once Weekly on Sunday at 9:30 AM

1.1.2 Maximum Normal Capacity is: 224 Under Social Distancing Capacity is: 51

1.1.2 Pre-Registration Encouraged.

- Pre-Registration will be done by phone to the Parish Office. By conducting pre-registration, entry will be more efficient and the time it takes to enter the church will be greatly reduced.
- Everyone will be assigned seating using our seating chart tool (EXHIBIT D1). All our pews now have numbers and are further given seat numbers. When assigning seating people not sharing a domicile will have to have three boxes between them and other attendees. This will permit us maximum use of seating while adhering to distancing requirements. EXHIBIT D illustrates a church diagram and provides measurements.
- Once church capacity is reached, people not making the cutoff will have priority for the following week.
- When we have acquired the necessary equipment, we will live stream our service into the parish hall where those not able to worship in the church can still be present and receive Communion. We will also continue live stream to YouTube.
- Registration will include the collection of names and contact information and recorded on the Pre-Registration Form (EXHIBIT C) which is collected for the purpose of having a means to provide contact tracking. Prior to accepting a registration, the health check script (EXHIBIT B) shall be reviewed with all.

1.1.3 Church Egress & Regress

- Entry will be exclusively through the main entrance and exit will be via the exit door to the parish hall (EXHIBIT D). All other doors shall remain locked to outside entry.
- Social distancing shall be maintained while people are waiting to enter the church.
- Church will be open for entry starting no later than 9:00 and people are encouraged to arrive early.

- Ushers will check names off on the Pre-registration form as they enter.
- Everyone must be wearing face covers/masks to enter the church.
- Ushers have been trained on social distance seating and will direct people to pew seats. Ushers shall maintain social distancing at all times and shall monitor the church for social distancing requirements and provide assistance where needed.
- Worshipers will leave the church one pew at a time, maintaining social distancing, as announced by the lead usher.
- No coffee or social hour will be held. We have no drinking fountains and water is available from a bottled water dispenser to throwaway cups.
- Doors shall be open to facilitate touchless entry and departure.

1.1.4 Non Pre-registration arrivals.

- Must wait in the designated area until it is determined that a seat is available.
- The Greater/Usher must obtain their response to the Screening Script.
- A table will be positioned in an isolated location for people to provide contact tracing information on a single form. This information will be consolidated on the Pre-Registration from EXHIBIT C by the Parish Administrator.

1.1.5 Pew Materials. All pew materials, prayer books, hymnals, cards, prayer requests, etc. has been removed from the pews.

1.1.6 Order of Service Bulletins. Will be produced for each worshiper and shall have the complete order of service printed therein. They shall be propositioned on pews 24 hours prior to the start of service. Plastic bag lined trash containers will be at the exit for worshipers to discard bulletins.

1.1.7 Service Protocols

- Seating. Seating will maintain social distancing requirements. See EXHIBIT D).
- Alms Baskets will be placed at the entrance and exit for worshipers to leave offerings.
- The Peace. All offers of peace will be non-touch. Worshipers will not leave their seating positions to extend peace.
- There will not be singing.
- Altar Attendants. There will be one symbolic non-participating Altar Attendant seated in the East Deacon Bench.
- Candles. Will be lit by the Altar Attendant prior to the positioning of the priest. They will be extinguished after the priest has departed the altar.
- Layreader. One Layreader who may be seated at and will read from the center of the West Deacons Bench.
- Sermon. The priest shall give the sermon either immediately in front of or behind the altar. This will allow for greater seating within social distancing requirements.

1.1.8 Cleaning. The Church will not be open or used until the following Sunday so specialty cleaning should not be required. There will be routine cleaning which will include sanitizing the pew tops, alter railings. However, immediately following the service, all hard services will be wiped down and disinfected using the Bio-Blast system.

1.19 Communications. We shall use all means available to communicate the safety procedures enacted by the Vestry, email, postal mail, phone calls, signs, word of mouth,

social media and our website. A summary of safety instructions (EXHIBIT I) shall be included in the order of service bulletin and widely distributed.

## 1.2 Service #2 Outdoor Evening Prayer.

1.2.1 Once Weekly on Saturday at 5:PM (weather permitting) held in one of two locations.

Location 1: The Garden Chapel which is an established outdoor chapel. It will accommodate two layreaders plus ten seated people and five standing people while maintaining social distancing requirements (EXHIBIT E). This location will be used only if the known attendance will be equal to or less than twelve people. Should the actual count exceed 12 people, the service will be moved to location 2 where up to 36 seats are available.

Location 2: The parking lot at the rear of the church grounds and near the Garden Chapel will be used because of the increased capacity of up to 36 seats (EXHIBIT F). It will accommodate 36 seated people while maintaining social distancing requirements.

### 1.2.2 Protocols for Outdoor Services

- The portable altar will be used as a Podium/Rostrum.
- Pre-registration preferred.
- There will be a designated greeter who will ensure worshipers are documented on the Contact Tracing Form.
- Evening Prayer Only, no Holy Eucharist.
- Vestments. None will be used.
- Alms Baskets will be at placed at entry ways.
- The Peace. All offers of peace will be non-touch. Worshipers will not leave their seating positions to extend peace.
- There will not be singing.
- All in attendance must wear face a cover/mask and a hand sanitizer station will be positioned at the entrance.
- Throw away order of service bulletins will be provided. Worshipers will take their bulletins home with them.
- Chairs and tables will be sanitized following the service and prior to being stored.

## 1.3 Indoor Communion.

### 1.3.1 Preparation.

- Prior to the service, one member of the Altar Guild, wearing mask and gloves, will set the altar as normal and put the people's communion wafers into a bread box or the ciborium properly secured with a lid.

### 1.3.2 Procedures.

- Priest sanitize his/her hands before setting the altar.
- Priest sets the table for communion unassisted and wearing a mask/face cover.
- Priest re-sanitize their hands after the table is set.
- Priest says Eucharist Prayer with the lid on bread box/ciborium.
- When Eucharistic Prayer is complete, the priest removes/lowers mask and consumes the priest's host and the wine in chalice.
- Thereafter priest repositions mask and removes chasuble prior to distributing communion and again sanitizes hands.
- Priest takes lid off bread box/ciborium and moves to center of communion rail.

- People come forward to receive communion maintaining proper social distancing.
- People stop at touchless sanitizing station positioned on approach 6 feet from the communion rail and sanitize their hands prior to approaching the priest.
- Upon arrival at communion rail, people lower their mask, hold out their hands, and the priest drops the wafer into their hands. Should the priest make contact with the person, they shall immediately re-sanitize their hands.
- There is no kneeling at the communion rail. People immediately consume the wafer, recover their face and return to their seating via the side aisles.
- Should someone ask for a blessing in lieu of communion, the priest should offer the usual blessing without touching the person.

1.3.3 No one is required to receive communion. The prayer for Spiritual Communion will be included in the Order of Service Bulletin for anyone who does not wish to come forward.

1.3.4 Concluding of Communion.

- Once everyone who desires to receive communion has, the priest will return to the altar to clean up.
- Once again sanitizes hands.
- Priest puts chasuble back on and concludes the service.

1.4 Vestments.

- Priest. The vestment will be stored in a stand-alone open area and not touched until the next Sunday (7 days).
- Altar Attendants. Vestments are for the exclusive use of each attendant and shall be either taken home with them or stored in plastic garment bags.

1.5 General Precautions & Protocols.

- The precautions & protocols will be posted on our website, on social media and we will do an informative email and postal letters.
- Greeters/Ushers will wear masks and disposable gloves.
- Worshipers will be told to avoid physical contact with everyone except family members.
- The Baptismal has been drained and there will not be holy water present.
- Touchless hand sanitizer stations will be in place at the entrance and exit.
- Only one person at a time will be allowed in the Sacristy.
- Services will not have a procession.
- Signs will be posted to summarize entry requirements.
- Announcements in regard to policy and procedures will be made immediately prior to the service and at conclusion prior to exiting.

1.6 **Overflow Parish Hall Worship.**

- Size: The Parish Hall (“PH”) is a rectangular hall measuring 30' by 60'. Not included in this measurement are individual classrooms along the south wall. The classrooms are locked and will not be used during the pandemic. The PH is limited to a capacity of 30 people for worship. See (EXHIBIT H).
- The floor will be marked to facilitate individual seating to maintain social distancing. Seats will be pre-positioned and people will be directed to seating by PH ushers.

- A big screen TV will be positioned at the end of the hall for live streaming of the service.
- Egress & Regress. People will enter through the main PH entry way and exit via the Church Exit. Touchless hand sanitizer stations will be in place at the entrance.
- Communion. Overflow PH worshipers will be escorted by an usher to the church main entrance to receive communion and will exit the church to the parking lot exit for reentry into the PH.
- All procedures promulgated for worship in the church shall, where applicable, apply to PH overflow worship/worshipers.

## 2.0 **Sunday School & Adult Education.**

- 2.1 Sunday School will be suspended indefinitely. When public schools resume or government authority provides guidance, St. Stephen's will develop a plan to adhere to guidelines.
- 2.2 In-Person Adult Education is also suspended indefinitely. We will continue to offer this via online live forums. At some point we will revisit this policy and establish protocols for in-person learning.

## 3.0 **Cleaning, Disinfecting, & Sanitization.**

- 3.1 Bathrooms. Disinfectant wipes and possibly sprays shall be present in all bathrooms. Signs shall advise people to wipe all facilities prior to and after use. Bathrooms shall be cleaned and disinfected Sunday mornings prior to church and within a few hours thereafter.
- 3.2 HVAC. The HVAC systems will be turned on 24-hours prior to the start of any occupancy in church facilities. The filtration will be changed monthly.
- 3.3 Water Systems. St. Stephen's is on a well water system. All water taps will be turned on and allowed to flow for 2-minutes prior to occupancy. Bathroom toilets will be flushed prior to occupancy. No water outlets will be accessible other than the bathrooms.
- 3.4 Equipment. Through the Diocese, the church has procured the Bio-Blast disinfectant system which will be used, as needed, throughout all church spaces.

## 4.0 **Parish Hall Community Groups/12 Step Programs.** The use of parish facilities and grounds for all tenant organizations and programs is suspended until such time as the Vestry, along with approval of the Diocese deems it safe to allow use. Once that time comes the following requirements shall apply.

- 4.1 Will be required to submit a written plan for resuming meetings. The plan must address:
  - The Contact Tracing protocol. How will they ensure the ability to provide contact tracing.
  - That they are limited to use of the Parish Hall and the bathrooms only.
  - Cleaning and sanitization prior to and after the meeting. This includes tables, chairs, and bathrooms.
  - How they will insure masks are used and social distancing is maintained.
  - The name and contact information of group leaders, primary and alternate.
  - The plan must be approved by the Vestry prior to the start of meetings.
  - They must commit in writing to follow all applicable laws and regulations governing COVID mitigation.
- 4.2 The Parish Hall kitchen is closed and shall not be utilized.

- 5.0 **Parish Operated Thrift Outlet.** The Thrift Outlet does not have running water, or toilets. It will re-open with the following protocols (EXHIBIT G).
- 5.1 Entry to the Thrift Outlet will be supervised. Maximum patron capacity is set at 8 people and an additional 3 staff people for a total of 11 persons. Once the maximum capacity is reached, people will have to wait in line outside until someone leaves. Waiting line social spacing will be indicated by marks on the ground. The door supervisor shall also open and close the door for patrons to avoid possible contamination of the door.
  - 5.2 Face coverings are required at all times for anyone inside the thrift outlet.
  - 5.3 A touchless hand sanitizing station will be positioned at the entry door and patrons will be required to sanitize their hands prior to entry.
  - 5.4 Thrift Outlet volunteer workers shall wear gloves while inside the store and when handling merchandise.
  - 5.5 The counter tops shall be wiped with disinfectant after every use by a patron.
  - 5.6 Signs shall be displayed explaining the protocols required to enter the shop.
  - 5.7 The thrift outlet will be sanitized daily 30 minutes prior to opening.
  - 5.8 The HVAC system will remain operational 24 hours a day. The filtration will be changed bi-monthly.