

## COVID-19 Reopening Plan & Protocols:

### INTRODUCTION:

On June 24, 2020, Gov. Cuomo issued the allowance of gatherings of up to **50 people** and religious gatherings to operate at **33% capacity**.

The practices of social distancing (six-feet apart, limited gatherings), wearing personal protection equipment (PPE), such as masks and adopting heightened cleaning regiments, including handwashing, are critically important in safeguarding each other as we reopen the Church for gatherings.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Social Distancing (6 ft. apart, limited gatherings)</li><li>▪ Use of PPE</li><li>▪ Heightened Cleaning Regiments (Cleaning the facility, washing of hands)</li></ul> |
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This document incorporates suggestions from our own Church body, including those in the medical professions and it incorporates best practices from other New York State churches, the Center for Disease Control Prevention (CDC) and New York State’s “*Reopening New York: Guidelines for Religious and Funeral Services (June 26, 2020)*” document.

Some in society may find the social distancing measures and safety protocols contained in this document to be unnecessary, restrictive or limiting their rights. Others do not see the coronavirus as a legitimate threat to people’s health.

For our purposes as a Church body, a couple of scriptures may be helpful.

1 John 3:16 “This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters.” (Sacrificing one’s rights)

Philippians 2:5-8 In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: <sup>6</sup>Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; <sup>7</sup> rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. <sup>8</sup> And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross! (Sacrificing one’s rights)

### GENERAL PRECAUTIONS:

Entry & Exit: As people enter, hand sanitizers will be made available and clearly seen upon entering a single entry point (i.e. the door that leads to the fellowship hall). Masks will be offered to those who do not have masks. Attendees will exit from the front entrance of the Church.

Social Distancing: Members must sit at least 6 feet apart throughout the service. Families may sit together. Important, members are welcomed to wave or bow rather than hugging or shaking hands. Members should be mindful of those sitting in front and behind them in the pews while maintaining six feet separation.

Note: Cloth face coverings should not be placed on children younger than 2 years old, anyone who has trouble breathing or is unconscious and anyone who is incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the cloth face covering without assistance.

Bulletins/Programs: There will be no bulletins or programs at this time.

Hymn Books & Shared Bibles in the Pews: At this time, there will be no hymn books or shared Bibles, typically located in the pews.

Seating & Singing: Pews will be clearly marked indicating a 6 ft. distance. Families and multiple people from the same household can set together.

Singing will be allowed if the person is singing with a mask on. If not wearing a mask, the person singing must be *12 feet* from the nearest person or is invited to worship in the fellowship hall, while maintaining a 12 foot distance.

Those who refuse to wear or cannot wear a mask due to health reasons are encouraged to hum or worship within themselves. However, no singing is allowed without wearing a mask (unless the person is 12 ft. away from others).

Offering: Passing of the offering plate increases the risk of spreading the virus. The offering plate will be placed in a designated spot for worshippers to place their offerings and gifts.

Fellowship/Coffee Hour: There will be no fellowship or coffee and snacks allowed after the service in the fellowship hall. People are welcomed to go outside, remaining 6 feet apart to socialize. Extended conversations and fellowship are to be outside and not within the facility.

Communion: Until further notice, communion service will be suspended.

Ministry Related Meetings: Until further notice, ministry related gatherings such as Bible Study, Women's Fellowship, etc. will be suspended or may be held remotely (i.e. through Zoom Meetings, etc.)

Pastoral Care: The pastor will continue to connect with people remotely and through phone calls. If an in-person meeting is requested or needed, social distancing (6 ft., wearing of masks) will be implemented. Meeting outside would be preferred but not necessary.

**INTENSIFIED CLEANING, DISENFECTION & VENTILATION:**

Intensified Cleaning: Frequently touched surfaces and necessarily shared objects will be cleaned and disinfected after each service before the next Sunday's gathering.

Intensified Ventilation: Prior to reopening, the ceiling fans throughout the building were tested and found to be in good working order to improve air circulation.

Per the CDC's Guidelines on reducing the risk, we will keep the two entry doors to the Church open and all windows will be opened during the service. All fans will be on as well.

**CHECK FOR SIGNS & SYMPTOMS—BEFORE YOU ATTEND:**

If you are sick or not feeling well, even in the slightest sense, please do not attend. If you have tested positive for COVID-19, please do not attend. If you have traveled to a destination which necessitates your being quarantined upon your return to the Capital Region, please do not attend.

If you or have had close contact with a person with COVID-19, please stay at home.

Ver. 7/30/20