

**St. James Episcopal Church (Prospect Park) AND
St. John the Evangelist Episcopal Church (Essington)
COVID-19 Re-Gathering Proposed Plan**

Through prayer and consultation, the Priest-in-Charge and the Vestries of St. James (Prospect Park) and St. John the Evangelist (Essington) met May 13 and May 14 via Zoom respectively, considered the COVID-19 cases in Delaware County, the potential of a resurgence of cases, the demographics of both parishes, and the ability to create our plan, including making sure we have the necessary personnel, equipment, and processes in order to reopen. After careful deliberation, we **voted to submit our plan to the Bishop to resume in-person worship for the first week of September with a ‘soft open’ with the vestry in the two weeks prior.** This parallels what many of the churches in the Interboro Ministerium are planning as well, so it aligns with both our geographical area and with our parish demographics. The plan includes a “soft opening” for Vestry members only, in order to worship in-person the two weeks before as a trial run. This will serve as a teaching opportunity about how we will “do in-person church”. Again, only when our area moves to the Yellow Phase and only when the Bishop approves the plan will we be able to move towards gathering in person.

A Coronavirus Task Force, consisting of five members of each Vestry (total of ten people) met with the Priest-in-Charge on Thursday, June 4th via Zoom to discuss and edit the plan, voted on this plan, and began the implementation of delegating space preparation and obtaining supplies. The Coronavirus Task Force will meet in July and August to check in on plans and supplies and go over procedures again. This plan was submitted to each of the Vestries for approval and each Vestry approved this plan (St. James on June 10th and St. John the Evangelist on June 11th).

WORSHIP:

- 25 people at a time max (including Priest, lectors, ushers)
- One in-person simple communion service(s) in the nave/Sanctuary
- Online worship should continue for those who wish to remain at home.
 - We may encourage in-home distancing small gatherings to worship together, especially if we decide to have only one service on Sunday and rotate through so that parishioners will be encouraged to come every other Sunday to retain the 25-person limit in the church.
 - We will do Facebook live for the service at each parish.
 - We need a schedule and system for this. Who is responsible for setting it up?
- Services will be on a reservation system for the first 12 (twelve) weeks, so that parishioners are able to rotate into spots for worship. Reservations (likely alphabetically by last name) will be for 20 (which will include the priest, ushers, and any other assistants), so that there is room for any new people to join. (*See first note under ‘Communication’ regarding this.)
 - Emails/online/phone calls—especially to older parishioners who do not have internet
 - How will we pastorally implement this limit (e.g. if over 25 people show up)?
- Seating during service and dismissal:
 - St. James: Ushers will assist parishioners (from 6 feet) to fill in marked off pews from front to back of nave at the start of the service. Ushers will dismiss rows from back to front after the service. Only back (main) door open.
 - St. John’s: Ushers will assist parishioners (from 6 feet) to fill in marked off pews from front to back of nave at the start of the service, however, the few parishioners who will use the stairlift will require another usher to assist so chair lift users are socially distanced upon seating. Ushers will dismiss from back to front after the service. Back (main) door open, and Sunday School door open.
 - Parishioners are expected to maintain 6 feet distance and stay in pews until directed to move to center aisle for communion and when the service is over for dismissal.

- Single use bulletin; recycled at the end of service
 - Who sets out the recycling bins and who immediately takes them outside to the recycling before the next service?
- No singing or choir.
 - As our organist is sight impaired, it would be impossible to remain 6 feet from her or protect her from being within 6 feet of others. We are also sympathetic to her need to both use her hands for sight, as well as her need to travel by Uber from her apartment in the city, which are both risk factors.
 - At this time, she could record organ music to be played in the service, but both churches would need to demonstrate how those recordings would be played, who is responsible for that, etc.
- There will be only one door that people enter and exit (the large red door at both parishes) for services. The doors will be propped open prior to services. The ushers will be the only ones touching doors (with gloves). After people sign in for reservation/contact tracing/Church Agreement Covenant, they will enter in the side that has an arrow.
- (St. John's)—There will be Clorox wipes on both levels of the chair lift with signs posted that each person will need to wipe the chair and arm rests after using.
- **ALL PEOPLE WILL WEAR MASKS FROM SIGN IN TO EXITING THE BUILDING.** Masks will cover both mouth and nose. Those with difficulty breathing and small children will not be required to wear them, but will be encouraged to take extra precautions. Supply of masks will be available with the Reservation Usher, and once given to a parishioner, they must either be taken home or thrown away after the service. The only time the mask is to be removed is to receive the host at Communion, at which point it will be put back on after.
 - Vestry members will pastorally implement mask wearing, so that the priest does not have to worry and can focus on the liturgy.
- Pump hand sanitizer will be in every pew at each end. Pump hand sanitizer will be at a 'station' prior to receiving communion and will be expected to be used prior to receiving.
- Liturgical Elements:
 - Lectors will wear masks. One lector will serve per service to do all of the readings/prayers, and she/he will sit either near the epistle lectern during the duration of the service or in the front row with her/his family unit. The lector will light the candles. She/he will use the single-use bulletin to read from, not the lectionary book. If she/he would like to process with the cross, she/he may. Any vestments not worn by the priest will remain in the home of the owner, not stored at the church.
 - No LEMS at this point; the priest will set the Table and serve.
 - All elements will be on the altar or credence table, placed by gloved altar guild member prior to the service.
 - Only one person in the sacristy at time; altar guilds may use two-person rotating teams if needed, but the previous sentence still stands. The altar guild, and anyone else involved with the preparation of the altar, should wear and mask and thoroughly wash their hands prior to beginning their work. The same applies to the cleaning of vessels, etc. after the service.
 - All linens will be cleaned between services.
 - Priest will disinfect her vestments between services.
 - A low contact thermometer and chart will be kept in the priest's/church offices with her temperature taken one hour before in-person services (and recorded).
 - Priest will preside entirely behind altar, with the homily from a few steps in front of the opening of kneelers at the altar.

- Blessings and peace said without touching; people will remain in their pews and offer a distanced peace through bowing or another gesture as they make eye contact with everyone.
- Offering:
 - Plates will be placed on a table at the back of the nave for people to drop checks/envelopes.
 - People will be encouraged not to give cash.
 - People will be encouraged to give online.
 - After the service, two counters will remain in the nave, sitting 6 feet apart. Both will wear gloves and remain wearing their masks. One will count the offering and move so that the other person can count. After reconciling, the offering will be placed by only one person in the treasurer's office (St. James) or the church office (St. John's). When the treasurer inputs the information from the collection and deposits it, she/he must wear gloves and mask.
 - After the money has been removed from the plate, the plate will be placed at the back of the nave to be cleaned.
- Communion:
 - Prayer will be over bread and wine (very small amount) and only the priest will consume wine.
 - Priest will wear mask except when preaching and consuming elements, and will wear gloves during distribution that will be removed after distribution.
 - Distributed (bread only) at front of center aisle.
 - Parishioners will be directed by ushers from front to back, and will stand on the spots of carpet marked at 6 feet, beside "empty pews."
 - One at a time distribution standing (or up to three people if there are adults with young children from same household).
 - Person will use hand sanitizer, receive host, and step to the side to consume and then re-mask.
 - Parishioners will use side aisles to return to seat, being careful not to touch pews with hands while going in or out of pews (and sanitizing hands if need to touch pews to assist in seating or getting out of pew).
- No coffee hour afterwards initially; may be able to happen outside after we get the rhythm of 6 feet distancing worship.
- No Sunday School.
- Lectionary Bible Study will continue to happen on Zoom.
- Encourage distancing greetings to happen after service and then be on your way home.
- Bathroom use:
 - Bathrooms in undercrofts will be closed.
 - Bathrooms stocked with Clorox wipes so that person can wipe door handle, lock, toilet flusher, light switch/plate, sink handles, etc. prior to leaving.
 - St. James: Bathroom by wheelchair ramp only one open; marking on hallways floor indicating where people should wait until it is available. Do not crowd hallways, as they are not big enough for 6 feet distancing. Doors propped open so no one has to touch them.
 - St. John's: Bathroom by sacristy will not be open as the hallway is too small. The bathrooms between the nave and the Sunday School room will be the only ones open; marking on hallway floor indicating where people should wait until it is available. Do not crowd hallways, as they are not big enough for a 6 feet distancing.
 - Encourage people to use restroom before attending service.
- Cleaning: Nave and appropriate spaces (hallways, bathrooms, Sacristy, doorknobs, light switch plates, door handles/flat door metal pieces, recycling bins, collection plates, microphone/speaker

input switches, microphones, processional cross, lighters, sacristy handles and items, chairlift (St. John's) etc.) must be cleaned after each service.

- What is our cleaning schedule and who will do it?
- **IMPORTANT:** Priest-in-Charge will clear her schedule as much as possible for the first few weeks to be able to make Eucharistic visits (outside homes if possible) to accommodate parishioners who might desire a Eucharistic visit rather than attending a service. She will take her temperature prior to the visits and record it.

OFFICE/BUILDING USE:

- Church Offices:
 - Initially no one is allowed in the church offices except the Priest-in-Charge, Senior Warden, Treasurer, and Administrative Assistant (and Director of Academy Preschool at St. James).
 - Said approved people will be required to follow an open and close checklist which will include cleaning instructions and log of who was in the building, date, time, etc. Documentation of checklists will be kept in main church office.
- Building:
 - Anyone who enters the building (maintenance, exterminator, yard work, etc.), must sign the Building Log with name, contact info, date, time.
- **PRIOR TO RE-GATHERING IN PERSON: ALL PERSONS** who have keys to the building **MUST** fill out Key Forms.

COMMUNICATION:

- **WE DO NOT KNOW THE STATE OF THE WORLD IN AUGUST/SEPTEMBER AND WE DO NOT KNOW HOW MANY PARISHIONERS WILL FEEL COMFORTABLE TO RETURN TO THE BUILDING AT THAT TIME; AS SUCH, VESTRY MEMBERS WILL DO A PHONE CALL SURVEY IN JULY/AUGUST TO GET NUMBERS ABOUT WHETHER ONE SERVICE A WEEK WILL ACCOMMODATE OR WHETHER WE NEED TO ADD A SECOND AND/OR USE A RESERVATION SYSTEM FOR SERVICES.**
 - Vestry members from St. John's will call St. James' parishioners, and St. James' Vestry members will call St. John's parishioners, in order to allow all people to freely speak about their fears and hopes without feeling pressure to 'come back' if they are not ready to do so. This is also a loving way the Vestry members can be serving the other parish in those pastoral conversations.
- Brief 'document' explaining procedures—posted on website, newsletters, mailed to parishioners, etc.
- "Welcome Table" will be outside the red door every Sunday
 - Who sets up the "Welcome Table" with Binders, hand sanitizers, pens, etc.?
 - Who cleans the table and items on it and puts it away?
- "Church Covenant for Regathering" (similar to <https://images.yourfaithstory.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2020/05/15222356/Covenant-for-Regathering3.pdf?fbclid=IwAR1eWUuszjco9PLaOOt8NVRi6zZdFQl8qxxvSABvSfy4VuloifBuQ0sK5cy8>) will be on every church bulletin and discussed with each person with the "Reservation Usher" prior to entrance.
 - Hand sanitizer will be required for all parishioners prior to entering the building.
 - After sanitizing, parishioners will receive single-use service bulletin upon entering

- “Reservation Usher” will take down all parishioners’ names, phone numbers, emails on a dated sheet which will be kept in a “Contact (Tracing)” binder.
 - Ushers will inform parishioners that the above information will be kept secure in the church office and only utilized if medically necessary.
- Who helps enforce social distancing and health/safety before/during/after services?
- What is our procedure to communicate if the virus is traced to our building?

GET:

- Disposable masks
- Gloves
- Hand sanitizer
- Extra cleaning supplies – Lysol cans, Clorox wipes
- Special Usher nametags for extra welcome and identification
- Binder for “Contact (Tracing)” information
- Low contact thermometer for priest’s office
- Binder for Church Building Log
- Binder for Office Open/Close Cleaning Log
- Binder for Key Log
- iPad/phone to Facebook live stream services
- Welcome table

DO:

- Remove hymnals/Bibles/Prayer Books from nave and store elsewhere(where??)
- Hire professional cleaning service/make cleaning plan
- Block off Sunday School Building/Wing
- Block off undercroft
- Create signage on doors that will remain locked
- Set up reservation system
- Train ushers with increased responsibilities
- Create full usher schedules
- Mark off 6 feet distancing outside of church doors
- Mark off pews
- Mark 6 feet distancing in aisle (to receive Communion)
- Mark arrows on floor
- Mark where priest will distribute communion and preach from
- Mark hallways for restroom users (including arrows to avoid bottleneck traffic)
- Remove all extra sheets of paper/materials on back nave tables
- Create “Church Covenant for Regathering” sheets
- Create “Contact (Tracing)” Notebook
- Create temperature check chart for priest
- Create altar guild schedules
- Make signs for bathrooms and other areas of the church to indicate traffic flow and reminder of procedures
- Create Church Office Open/Close Cleaning Log
- Create Church Building Log
- Get every person to fill out Key Log

- Create Key Log Binder
- Create signs for chair lift cleaning
- Figure out set up for Facebook live streaming services
- Figure out to play recorded organ music in service
- Create weekly checklist for service (e.g. doors propped open, signage up, ushers arrived early and in place, binders for check in ready, etc.)
- Create “Welcome” table sign with Agreements and Contact Tracing binders, welcome sign, hand sanitizers, etc.