

PROTOCOLS DURING PANDEMIC
Faith Episcopal Church, Poulsbo, WA

In 2020, the world became aware of the novel corona virus and we now know, all too well, its deleterious effects on human life and flourishing. At this writing, over half a million people worldwide have died from the COVID19, the illness caused by the virus.

Good science has discovered that COVID19 is more contagious than the influenza virus, more people die from COVID19 than seasonal flu, and especially individuals who are more vulnerable to the virus. These people include:

People who are 65 years old and older
People who already have compromised immune systems
People who are diabetic
People who are obese
People who have asthma &/or heart issues

We now know that people of every age are susceptible to the direst consequences of COVID19. Children, young adults, and infants. None of us is immune from the effects of this virus.

As followers of the risen Christ, we are charged with loving God with our hearts, souls, minds, and strengths, and loving our neighbors as ourselves; indeed, the way we love God, Jesus tells us, is by loving our neighbors. To that end, in conjunction with the Safe Start guidelines provided by the State of Washington, and in accordance with the Guide to Gathering in Person document of the Diocese of Olympia, Faith Episcopal Church will adopt the following protocols to ensure we are loving our neighbors.

CHURCH BUILDINGS

Prior to worshipping again in the church building:

The church will undergo a thorough cleaning following CDC guidelines
All prayer books and hymnals will be removed from pew backs and stored in the nursery
All newcomer forms, pens, etc. will be removed and stored in the nursery
All books, toys, and art supplies for children will be removed from the nave and stored in the nursery.
The nursery will be locked and off-limits during Phases 1, 2, & 3 of the Safe Start

High-contact areas will be thoroughly sanitized before, in between, and after services at the church. Included are:

Pew backs & sides
Doorknobs
Light switches

Thermostats
Electronic equipment
Pulpit
Altar hard furnishings

Seating areas will be clearly delineated to ensure a minimum of six feet distance between individuals and households.
The baptismal font will be removed from the sanctuary and will remain set aside and empty of water until it is safe to fill it again.
Extraneous chairs will be removed from the dais

Hand Sanitizer, hand tissues, and trash receptacles will be readily available
Capacity will be in compliance with Washington State guidelines—see below under “worship service”—and posted at entries to buildings.
The restroom in the church will be made available for use. There will be disinfectant (either spray or wipes) on hand in the restroom.

The parish hall will remain closed for fellowship until Kitsap County enters Phase 4

WORSHIP SERVICES

Worship services will continue to be held virtually during Phases 2 and 3 of Washington State’s Safe Start Program. Additionally, once we begin worshipping in the building again, we will livestream our services so those who choose not to attend are still able to worship with their community.

Per the State of Washington’s guidelines (contained herein), in Phase 2, Faith may conduct outdoor services with up to 100 people or indoor services with 25% capacity. Capacity of our church building is roughly 160 people so the most we would be able to accommodate at one time, would be 40. Currently, just half our parishioners are willing to attend worship services in person so we will easily stay below 25% capacity; however, as more people begin to show interest in attending, we will add a second service on Sundays.

Each week a volunteer will be the “Virus Verger”. This person will oversee the implementation of these protocols and will work with the vicar in training others.

Before entering the building:

If anyone is ill, they are asked to remain home.

Parishioners will RSVP for services, so we are able to plan adequate spacing for families, individuals, etc. This may be done electronically via the website, or by email. *If maximum capacity hasn’t been realized via RSVPs, additional space will be made available.*

Only the main entry to the church will be used for ingress and egress, and the double doors will be propped open in order to provide good air circulation as well as limit the amount of surface contact thereby decreasing the risk of contagion via repeatedly opening the doors

Signs will be posted at all entry points clearly stating the requirements for entering the building. Additionally, there will be signage throughout the premises reminding people of COVID19 symptoms, encouraging good hygiene, stressing the importance of masks, social distancing, etc.

Each time an individual attends a service or a meeting, they will fill out and sign the consent document (*Individual Attestation and Consent to Work/Participate—copy enclosed*). This consent form will be retained by the church for 21 days after which it will be destroyed. In the event of a case of COVID19 in the community, the church will be able to use these forms to provide authorities with information regarding who was in attendance that day so they might seek testing or practice self-quarantining.

Sanitized pens will be provided for each person to sign the document

Each person's temperature will be taken via touchless thermometer

Although a fever is not a definitive indication of COVID19 infection, it remains an indicator of infection &/or underlying illness which may increase a person's vulnerability. If someone's temperature is 100.4 degrees or higher, they will be asked to return home.

Each person is required to wear a face mask at both indoor and outdoor services. The mask shall be worn correctly, covering both the nose and the mouth.

If they don't have one with them, they will be provided a mask.

If they refuse to wear a mask, they will not be able to enter the building and will be asked to leave the premises.

If they enter the building without a mask after the service has begun and refuse to put one on after being offered a mask, the service will stop and all present must leave.

The only exceptions made to this rule will be for children under 2 years of age

Each person is required to use hand sanitizer before entering the church.

A touchless sanitizer dispenser will be available for this purpose.

Social distancing (at least 6 feet apart) will be observed as people queue to enter the building. The sidewalk will be marked to assist in the distancing; likewise, people will not linger in the aisle on their way to their seats, but do their best to get to their seat as quickly as possible

During the Service

There will be *no singing* until Phase 4

The only time a person may remove their mask is if they are consuming communion, reading a lesson, leading the Prayers of the People, preaching, or praying in the context of presiding. After the host is consumed, the lesson read, prayers offered, or the sermon is finished, the person will immediately put their mask back on.

At the peace, people will stay in their pews.

There will be no touching, hugging, handshaking at the Peace.

In order to maintain appropriate social distancing, there will be no more than one person serving at the altar with the priest. Both will wash their hands with warm, soapy water at the peace, and sanitize them before Eucharist.

There will be no offering plates/baskets passed amongst the people. There will be one clearly available into which people may place their offerings upon entering or exiting the building.

There will be no kneeling or standing together at the communion rail. Instead, parishioners will be instructed when to come forward to the altar where they will take a consecrated host off the fair linen. They will come forward individually, take the host and return to their seats maintaining a safe distance with others.

There will be no sharing wine from the common cup until Kitsap County has moved to Phase 4. Until then, the priest will consecrate a small amount, which they alone will consume, or which will be emptied into the piscina after the service.

After the service, people will exit the church beginning with the back pews. There is to be no lingering in the aisles or narthex; everyone will exit the church completely, while maintaining an acceptable distance from one another. The vicar will go directly to the vesting room and will then join people outside away from the building so as to prevent undue congestion. Once outside, people must continue to wear facial masks and socially distance.

OUTSIDE SERVICES

All preventative protocols, as listed above, will remain in place for outside services as well including:

Release forms

Temperature check

Mandatory use of face masks

Social distancing of at least 6 feet

Hand sanitizer

Additionally, people will be asked to bring their own chairs and prayer books as needed.

MEETINGS

Bishop's Committee meetings, Bible Study, and formation classes will continue to be held online until further notice. Godly Play in person is suspended; however, participants may meet via Zoom if they choose.

All groups who use Faith will be required to abide by the guidelines established by the State of Washington, the Diocese of Olympia, and these protocols while observing all limits imposed concurrent with the respective Phase of Kitsap County.

FAITH EPISCOPAL CHURCH, POULSBO

Individual Attestation and Consent to Work/Participate

In compliance with the State of Washington's "Safe Start" plan and the Diocese of Olympia's "Guide to Gathering in Person," Faith Episcopal Church (Poulsbo) requires that you be informed of the symptoms, and mechanisms of spread, of the 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19); attest to be symptom free at time of entering the premises, consent to the risks of working, volunteering, or participating in any activity on the premises, and to release Faith from liability in the event of exposure or sickness.

What is the Coronavirus and how does it spread?

COVID-19 is an illness caused by a virus that is spread person-to-person or by touching a contaminated surface and then touching your eyes, nose, mouth, or face. The virus is believed to be spread primarily through respiratory droplets. Those who have been infected have reported mild to severe symptoms, and can include:

Fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea.

While all people are potentially at risk of contracting COVID-19, older people (over the age of 65) and those with underlying health conditions (heart or lung disease, diabetes, etc.) are at greater risk and are strongly encouraged to stay home.

If you are experiencing any of these symptoms, or have come into contact with anyone who has shown signs of these symptoms or has tested positive for COVID-19, please vacate the premises immediately and contact your medical care provider.

Cooperative Mitigation Policy

To ensure the health and well-being of all parishioners, staff, volunteers, any person entering the premises of Faith Episcopal Church for work or worship must consent to the following practices:

- A cloth face covering must be worn at all times
- Physical distancing of at least six (6) feet must be maintained between all persons not from the same household
- Wash hands thoroughly or use hand sanitizer (provided) upon entry, after using the restroom, and before and after consuming any food or drink, or coming into contact with high-touch surfaces
- Refrain from physical contact and sharing items with others (e.g., books, leaflets, pens, etc.)
- For staff and volunteers: wipe down high-touch surfaces before and after use (e.g. light switches, doorknobs, copier and printer equipment, etc.)
- Sign an Individual Attestation and Consent to Work/Participate

Attestation and Consent

By signing below, you attest:

- That you have not exhibited any symptoms of COVID-19 or come into contact with anyone who has or has tested positive
- That you have followed the CDC and Washington Health officials' guidelines of maintaining physical distancing, wearing facial coverings, and refrained from participating in gatherings that do not observe these guidelines
- That you have not travelled internationally in the past 14 days

And you consent:

- To our keeping this document on file for 21 days for the purpose of contact tracing, should an exposure event occur
- To the risks associated with community transmission of COVID-19 and the potential for exposure even with proper mitigation protections
- To comply with the stated Cooperative Mitigation Policy
- To release **Faith Episcopal Church** from any liability in the event that you are exposed and/or become ill

Name

Phone

Email

Signature

Date