A Guide to Gathering

Response to COVID-19 Plan

St. Mary’s Episcopal Church
10630 Gravelly Lake Dr. SW
Lakewood, WA 98499

September 23, 2020

Revised
Table of Contents

Priest-in-Charge-Gathering Plan .................................. Page 3-5
Cleaning Protocol ....................................................... Page 6-10
Gathering in the Building ............................................. Page 11-13
HVAC Operations ...................................................... Page 14-15
Communications ....................................................... Page 15
Event Disclosure/Screening Form ................................. Page 16
From the Priest-in-Charge-Gathering Plan

A task force of staff and parishioners began meeting every other week in late Spring. Our intention was to monitor scientific guidelines, evaluate directives from the Diocese and the State, and prepare for a phased re-gathering as the situation improves. Safety was our ultimate concern as well as meeting the needs of our congregation.

Re-Opening Plan

Phase 1

The building was closed on March 13, and we broadcast our first virtual worship service on Sunday, March 15th. We initially experimented with live stream and Zoom, but settled on prerecording services and then broadcasting them through YouTube and Facebook Live. The presiders were videoed at Church; preachers recorded their sermons at home; music was also prerecorded at the church with the organ/choirmaster, at most two masked and socially distanced singers for the traditional service and six worship team members (4 instrumentalist and 2 singers) appropriately distanced and masked; and parishioners were recorded reading the assigned lections, Prayers of the People, etc on their porches or in the garden at church. Our media technician edited the various pieces together, interspersing pictures and printed materials. Our aim was to make worship engaging and interesting by enabling the participation of a variety people.

Every attempt has been made to take precautions and follow protocol for recording and for music rehearsals. All unnecessary items such as prayer books, hymnals, pew cushions, etc. have been removed to ensure easy cleaning on a regular basis. The font and Aumbry have been emptied and will remain so until we return to in-person worship.

Phase 2

Preparations have been made for small services and gatherings in the columbarium garden. This is an outside venue that can accommodate up to 25 people masked and socially distanced. The plan is to use this venue for small interment services with only staff and family present. This is a beautiful space that meets all safety and size requirements because it is outdoors. The area also has WiFi and live stream capabilities which can provide access for family and friends of the deceased who are unable to travel and to fellow parishioners who would like to attend.

We are currently considering using this venue for small, brown bag lunch gatherings with proper masking and social distancing. This will enable parishioners who desire social contact to gather together as well as providing the priest-in-charge with the opportunity to meet with small. If we are able to celebrate Eucharist while we are still in Phase 2, we would plan to celebrate in the garden with 20 or fewer people. These would be short services with no sermon or music. Distribution of Communion would be done following diocesan protocols.
Phase 3

It is our hope to offer in-person worship in the columbarium garden (weather permitting) or in the sanctuary. We can seat up to 150 people with proper social distancing in the Nave, but we will keep our numbers to the limits set by the State. Reservations will be taken online and all appropriate protocols as set out by the Diocese will be followed. There would be no congregational singing until it is determined that it is safe to do so.

Protocol for the distribution of Eucharist through Phase III

1. Proper precautions including the use of PPE and distancing guidelines will be followed by all. The Altar Guild and all in the chain will carefully sanitize all surfaces, wash and sanitize hands, wear masks, etc. all linens, including the pall should be cleaned thoroughly after each use.
2. Everyone in the service and in the altar party, will always wear a mask except for the one that is speaking.
3. The Presider alone will set the table. This includes bringing items from the credence table.
4. The Presider should vigorously wash and sanitize hands before the service, and multiply times throughout the service, most especially just before setting the table and beginning the prayer of consecration. This will not be a ceremonial but vigorous washing.
5. In setting the table, the Presider will use a purificator to cover all wafers, and only expose the priest host. This is protect the elements from the Presider’s droplets.
6. The priest host will only be touched and consumed by the Presider.
7. No one else should stand near the Presider at the altar.
8. For distribution, the Presider will either consume the priest host before distribution or set it aside to consume after all have received.
9. Wafers will then be placed at least 6 inches apart in a line around the sides and front of the altar.
10. The use of other tables to insure accessibility is also acceptable.
11. After the Presider places these first wafers on the table, the ushers will begin to allow the congregants to come forward one at a time, all the while keeping social distancing. We will place tape on the floor to provide spacing guidance.
12. Before approaching the altar everyone receiving will sanitize their hands, allowing them to dry before they go forward. The ushers will each have a bottle of sanitizer to facilitate this process.
13. Every person should take one wafer and not consume it until back in their pew. At that point, they can remove their mask and consume the wafer. It is recommended that everyone re-sanitize their hands after touching their mask and consuming the wafer.
14. The use of real bread is discouraged at this time.
15. There will be no wine offered to anyone other than the Presider until Phase IV.
Protocol for administering Baptism through Phase III

1. For baptism, only one Presider is allowed for all manual acts, blessing the water, baptizing, anointing, etc.

2. Water should not be put into the font until the actual blessing of the water.

3. Only the Presider may touch the water.

4. Presider will vigorously wash their hands and sanitize before the Blessing of the Water, and will repeat this action before and after each baptism.

5. If aspersions are planned for the congregation, that water should be extracted from the font, in a dedicated bowl, by the Presider, before any baptisms take place and set aside for use for this.

6. If there are multiple baptisms, you have several options when baptizing. You may take water in your hands and move away from over the font, and pour the water over the candidates head. Or you could use a separate bowl and walk to the candidate to baptize, trying not to let water fall off the head of the person, back into the bowl. If this does happen, please use a new bowl. In fact, it would be best to have a new bowl for each candidate.

7. Presider only anoints. Wearing mask.

8. Candles should either be not used during this time, OR, you may light the candle, show it to the person, then blow it out and keep this to be sanitized after the service and given to the candidate. You could do all of this after the service if you wish.

9. During this time there is to be no sprinkling of the congregation with the water in font or bowls used for baptisms. Only use the water set aside in the beginning.

10. All water, in all bowls and the font should be discarded BEFORE the ending of the service.

11. Prior to the baptism you could send a link to the congregants with a card whereby people could download and print that includes the line, "Will you who witness these vows do all in your power to support this person in her life in Christ? We will." and ask people to write a message and mail it to the baptismal candidate, affirming their participation in the liturgy and the covenant and whatever other message of welcome and support they want to give.
Cleaning and Disinfecting Protocols

The following cleaning and disinfection protocol for St. Mary’s Episcopal Church is prepared with the goal of establishing and maintaining a healthy and safe workplace and gathering place for worship. This protocol was developed by the reopening task force. This protocol reflects requirements and guidelines by Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the State of Washington (Safe Start Washington), Tacoma Pierce County Health Department (TPCDH) and guidance from University of Washington Environmental Health Services’s protocol for enhanced cleaning and disinfection.

1. General

   A. Employee Education

      i. Coronavirus (COVID-19) Prevention: Basic workplace hazard education about coronavirus are provided to employees. Prominently posted signage throughout the workplace re: social distancing, frequent hand washing, required PPE, respiratory etiquette, and illness reporting. Cleaning staff and others should clean hands often, including immediately after removing gloves by washing hands with soap and water for 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available and hands are not visibly dirty, an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol may be used. However, if hands are visibly dirty, always wash hands with soap and water.

      ii. All staff are trained on donning and doffing required personal protective equipment (PPE). Wear disposable gloves and gowns for tasks in the cleaning process to protect from contamination. Additional PPE may be required based on the splash risk of cleaning or disinfecting agents, protective/safety glasses or goggles when potential for splashing or when spraying the disinfectant. Gloves and gowns should be removed carefully to avoid contamination of the wearer and the surrounding area. Wear the required PPE during cleaning and disinfecting:

      iii. Cleaning staff are trained on appropriate use of cleaning and disinfect. Safety data sheets (SDSs) for all disinfectants are kept on site.

   B. Regular housekeeping schedule established and documented for regular, frequent, and periodic cleaning.

   C. Enhanced cleaning and disinfection is focused on frequently touched surfaces in offices, conference rooms, restrooms, the narthex and the nave. High touch surfaces include doorknobs, pews, kneelers, tables, handrails, handles, countertops, desks, phones, shared equipment (e.g. copier, computer monitors, keyboards, mouses, input and output devices, etc.), drinking fountains, faucets, sinks and toilets. Following occupancy of the physical plant, whether those recording for virtual worship or other parish functions and after regathering the occupied areas and objects will be cleaned and disinfected using appropriate cleaners and disinfectants to minimize the risk of virus transmission after in person services or videography for virtual services to subsequent occupants.
Cleaning and disinfection frequency is determined by occupancy and use of the objects and spaces. This will be completed prior to re-occupancy; if the space is not occupied for the following 7 day interval, the space may be cleaned with or without disinfection.

2. Cleaning and disinfecting surfaces and equipment

   A. Wear disposable gloves to clean dirty surfaces and objects using a detergent or soap and water prior to disinfecting. Cleaning with soap and water reduces number of germs, dirt and impurities on the surface. Disinfecting kills germs on surfaces. Surfaces and objects in public places should be cleaned and disinfected before each use.

   B. Use an EPA-registered disinfectant approved for use against the virus that causes COVID 19: SARS-CoV-2 (see List N: Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2 qCOVID-19). Follow the instructions on the label for safe and effective use of the product.

   C. Follow the manufacturer’s instructions to ensure safe and effective use of all cleaning and disinfection products.

      i. The disinfectant concentrations and contact time are critical for effective disinfection of surfaces. Diluted preparations are to be labeled and dated.

      ii. Ensure disinfectants are handled safely and prepared in well-ventilated areas while wearing appropriate PPE to avoid harmful exposure.

   D. Consider putting a wipeable cover on electronics or consult manufacturer’s recommendations for cleaning products appropriate for electronics, e.g. tablets, touch screens, keyboards. If not, consider using alcohol-based wipes or spray of at least 70% alcohol as it may reduce risk of damage to computers and electronic components. Dry surface thoroughly.

   E. If products on list N are not available, diluted household bleach solutions can be used if appropriate for the surface. Unexpired household bleach will be effective against coronaviruses when properly diluted. The following solutions are also effective for disinfection of hard, non-porous surfaces.

      i. Bleach solution: dilute bleach solution (5.25%–8.25% sodium hypochlorite). Check to ensure the product is not past its expiration date. Ensure proper ventilation during preparation and after application. Prepare a diluted bleach solution by mixing 5 tablespoons (1/3rd cup of 5.25%–8.25% bleach per gallon of room temperature water OR 4 teaspoons of 5.25%–8.25% bleach per quart of room temperature water. After application, allow 1-2 minutes of contact time before wiping, or allow to air dry (without wiping). Never mix household bleach with ammonia or any other cleanser. This can cause fumes that may be very dangerous to inhale. Prepare fresh daily, solutions will be effective for disinfection up to 24 hours.

      ii. A solution with at least 70% alcohol can be used for surface disinfection. Alcohol is a flammable liquid, and should not be stored near ignition sources.
F. For soft (porous) surfaces such as carpeted floor, rugs, drapes and fabric chairs:

   i. Vacuum as usual. Remove any visible contamination (if present) and clean using soap and water or cleaners appropriate for use on these surfaces.

   ii. After cleaning, launder items (as appropriate) according to manufacturer’s instructions. If possible, launder items using the warmest appropriate water setting for the items and dry items completely.

   iii. If laundering is not possible, use an EPA-registered disinfectant approved for use against SARS-CoV-2. Refer to the list of products pre-approved for use against emerging enveloped viral pathogens or the list of EPA-registered disinfectants approved for use against SARS-CoV-2.

3. Safety guidelines during cleaning and disinfection

   i. Wear disposable gloves when cleaning and disinfecting; gloves should be discarded after each use. Clean hands immediately after gloves are removed.

   ii. Wear eye protection when there is a potential for splash or splatter to the face.

   iii. Store disinfectants in labeled, closed containers. If dispensing disinfectants into secondary containers (e.g. spray bottles) or preparing diluted bleach, these must also be labeled with their contents and dispensing or dilution date. Keep them secure away from children and food and store them in a manner that prevents leakage, tipping or spilling.

4. Regathering

   A. Public spaces gathering events should be limited to the necessary spaces (e.g. narthex, restrooms, sacristy and nave).

   B. Following occupancy of the sanctuary for worship regathering, surfaces and objects will be cleaned and disinfected using appropriate cleaners and disinfectants prior to reoccupancy.

      i. Follow manufacturer’s instructions in cleaning and disinfection process

      ii. Prepare and handle cleaners and disinfectants safely in well ventilated space

      iii. Wear appropriate PPE

      iv. Clean and disinfect highly touched surfaces, hard and non-porous plus soft porous surfaces and objects. This will be completed prior to re-occupancy; if the space is not occupied for the following 7 day interval, the space may be cleaned with or without disinfection.

5. Confirmed case of COVID-19

   A. Enhanced cleaning and disinfection is required of all potentially contaminated locations, where a person with confirmed COVID-19 spent more than 10 minutes. The protocol is applied where an individual was present from 48 hours prior to the onset of symptoms until seven days after the individual was present.
B. The scope of cleaning and disinfection is based upon the risk of potential contamination of all impacted areas. This determination of locations that require additional cleaning and disinfection is based on the following assessment:

i. Document date(s) and duration of time spent (more than 10 minutes) in location(s) that have not already been cleaned and disinfected since the person in question was last in the space.

ii. Frequency of routine cleaning and disinfection for identified location(s)

iii. Date of onset of symptoms and/or date of positive test results

iv. Activities conducted in the space(s)

v. Face coverings and personal protective equipment worn by the COVID-19 positive person

C. The cleaning staff will determine scope of cleaning and disinfecting of impacted area’s surfaces and objects following the guidance above. While cleaning large surface areas and/or utilizing a spray application of chemical disinfectant one must:

i. Open doors and windows to increase air circulation, where possible.

ii. If possible, wait 24 hours after a person with COVID-19 was present in a space prior to beginning cleaning and disinfection. If it is not possible to wait 24 hours, the cleaning crew should increase the level of PPE used while cleaning and disinfecting, including using an N95 filtering respirator mask.

iii. If vacuuming is needed, wait until the room or space is empty and use a high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter with vacuum.

D. Close off areas used by the person who is sick; access to areas needing to be cleaned and disinfected will be restricted by appropriate barrier and signage to restrict area access until cleaning and disinfection are complete.

i. Wear appropriate PPE to clean and disinfect observing appropriate precautions and instructions for safe and effective cleaning and disinfection.

ii. Consider temporarily turning off room fans and the central HVAC system that services the room or space, so that particles that escape from vacuuming will not circulate throughout the facility.

iii. Once area has been appropriately disinfected; it can be opened for use. If more than 7 days pass since the sick person last visited or used the facility, additional cleaning and disinfection is not necessary. Continue routine cleaning and disinfection.

E. Appropriate notifications, in accordance with COVID-19 reporting to TPCHD/WADOH for appropriate contact tracing to prevent transmission and initiate any cleaning and disinfection that is needed.

F. Cleaning and disinfecting outdoor areas generally require normal routine cleaning, but do not require disinfection.
Sources and COVID-19 resources:
https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2-covid-19

Six Steps for Safe & Effective Disinfectant Use | US EPA

www.ehs.washington.edu


https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/


COVID-19 Reopening Guidance for Businesses and Workers (Washington Governor Inslee's office)

*CDC approved* - Cleaning Checklist located in Sextons daily work binder to provide a guide and compliance / audit paper trail document.
Gathering in The Building – Protocol & Procedures:

Self-Screening -Before Coming to Church:

Before coming to Church, all staff, identified leaders, volunteers, and parishioners are required to do a self-administered health screening. Covid 19 can present with a multitude of symptoms. If the following are experienced, it is better to be prudent and stay home.

- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fever
- Chills
- Repeated shaking with chills
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell
- Diarrhea
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or Vomiting
- Fatigue

Visitors:

All visitors/volunteers will sign in, complete a brief health assessment, including temperature checks. COVID 19 preventive practices will be emphasized: wear a mask when 6 feet distance cannot be maintained; practice social distancing, and wash/sanitize hands often.

Entry Process

- All parishioners will enter through the designated door for the church event.
- When guests arrive at the Church, they will stand at least 6 feet apart as they approach the door to the Entrance. An usher will be present to facilitate the process.
- The wearing of cloth, non-surgical facial masks will be required to enter the building; and must be worn the entire time while on the premises. A mask will be provided to those who do not have one.

Screening Process

- Upon entry, the member will be directed to a station (s) to sanitize hands; (b) sign in and verify that no symptoms of Covid -19 are present.
- Temperature checks will be taken and recorded by a trained volunteer.
- If the member displays symptoms, a fever of 100.4 degrees F. or above, or is not feeling well, he/she will be escorted to the conference room and isolated from other people entering the building. Arrangements will be made for the person to be transported home or to a health care facility.
• A release from liability form must be signed by the individual before proceeding to church/sanctuary.
• After screening is completed, hands will be sanitized again before entering the sanctuary.

**Entrance to the sanctuary and church service:**

• A trained volunteer will escort the parishioner to the church/sanctuary and explain changes:
• the layout of the church/sanctuary has been modified to ensure physical distancing protocols are maintained.
• do not expect to sit in your “normal” spot
• there will be no prayer books, hymnals, or bibles available at any service.
• there will be no congregational singing, but there will be worship music.
• Communion will be offered per the Bishop and Priest-in-Charge’s directive.
• A contactless “Peace” will be offered from a distance by waving or bowing only.
• Offerings will not be collected by passing a plate. Collection plates will be placed at the back of the church.

**Dismissal:**

• At the conclusion of the service, ushers will dismiss parishioners at the appropriate time row by row. Members will leave promptly through the designated exit.
• Parishioners will be reminded to wear masks and keep the required 6 feet social distancing when socializing with others.
• Coffee hour or beverage service will not be offered at this time.
• For health reasons, nursery services will not be provided.
• A reminder that if you test positive for Covid-19 and you have entered the building or attended and activity, you are required to contact Parish Office directly.
• Follow up will include informing the appropriate health officials and notifying people who may have come into contact with the individual at St. Mary’s. The contact procedure will be coordinated by the Parish Administrator or designate.

**Protecting volunteers and staff**

The safety and health of staff and volunteers in all ministries is a major priority. Staff is encouraged to work from home as much as possible. St. Mary’s will put the following specific procedures and facility modifications in place to ensure the risk of contracting covid-19 to all staff and volunteer ministers is minimized:

• Masks will be available, and use will be required.
• Access and complete *CDC Restart Readiness Checklist and Worker Protection tools.*
• Ample quantities of hand sanitizer and latex gloves in convenient locations will be made available.
• A system will be put in place to allow volunteers and staff to make anonymous suggestions and/or reports of unsafe practices.
Employee training and safety:

All employees will be trained in COVID 19 safety practices. Employees will sign the attendance sheet daily; and temperature checks will be maintained.

The CDC Restart Readiness Checklist for COVID 19 (see attached) will be completed by the Parish Office. Components of the checklist include (1) preening and reducing transmission among employees; (2) maintain healthy business operations; and (3). Maintain a healthy work environment.

The CDC Worker Protection Tool for COVID 19 will be used to ensure employee safety.

Training:

- Orientation will be provided to any individual involved in re-entry procedures.

Signage:

- Approved CDC signs addressing COVID symptoms, safety measures, and cleaning procedures will be posted in the appropriate places throughout the church/facility.

Other Groups:

- Any group or organization (volunteer group, social group, lessee/tenant, etc.) that utilizes our church facilities/grounds are subject to the same policies/procedures that are in place for St. Mary's Episcopal Church.

References, Covid 19 Reopening

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): Coronavirus Disease 2019: Coronavirus Disease 2019: Community and Faith Based Organizations

2. Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department: COVID 19: Guidance for Reopening; Safe Start

3. The Episcopal Diocese of Olympia: COVID 19: Requirements, Recommendations, and Resources


5. St. Mark’s Episcopal Church, Tampa FL: COVID 19 Protocols


HVAC Operations and Ventilation

Pursuant to our reopening safety plans, we engaged the firm Capital Heating and Cooling to evaluate the relevant HVAC systems in our church. This included an on-site meeting with a representative of the firm including members of our Reopening Task Force and Junior Warden.

Background

St. Mary’s Episcopal Church has several HVAC systems that cover the various areas of our physical plant. These areas are:

1. Nave
2. Narthex and Narthex Bathrooms
3. Classrooms A
4. Classrooms B
5. Parish Offices
6. Vesting Room and Choir Rehearsal Room
7. Parish Hall A
8. Parish Hall B

For the purposes of our study we only focused on the areas of our Narthex and Nave. These being systems 1 and 2.

These areas are the only spaces non-staff-members will be allowed to enter until it is safe. In addition, we were concerned that a more in-depth survey of our systems would require a longer on-site visit with firm representatives, parish staff, and parish members present.

We did not wish to expose anyone any longer than absolutely necessary. When it is safe to do so, we will engage in a similar review of the other HVAC systems on our campus.

Findings

From our meeting with the firm representative we learned that our current systems in the Nave and Narthex both have sufficient exchanges per hour to maintain safety for gatherings of the number of people that are allowed by diocesan and state guidelines provided the following protocol is used:

1. In the case of the Nave and Narthex, the circulating fans of the HVAC system are kept running at all times to maintain airflow even when the space is not being used.
2. In the case of the Narthex, external door must be left open when individuals are gathered.
3. Masks are to be worn by all individuals for whom it is safe to do so whenever they are in the building.
In addition, the HVAC system for the Nave has the capability of receiving upgrades to its filtration capabilities to the level of MERV 13 and to increase the amount of external air used in its operation to ASHRAE standards.

We have received a proposal to undertake these changes as well as to enter into the necessary service contract with Capital Heating and Cooling to regularly change the filters and monitor the system for needed repairs.

Under our policy that expenditures of more than $500 and/or entry into contracts must receive approval of the Vestry, these proposals are now under review. Further updates to this report will be made as and when the system is upgraded.

Communications

Communication with members of St. Mary’s is vital to maintaining our sense of community until we can truly gather in person and beyond. Dissemination of factual and important information helps to keep us connected and dispelling fear. Through our weekly Parish Post, Special Edition Parish Posts, mailings to those without email/homebound and use of the electric message sign, our goal is to be a resource for all parishioners.

We will achieve our goals through the following steps:

- Develop, implement an approved plan of reentry to the building
- Communicate and share relevant components of the plan
- with congregation
- Provide updates on progress
- Use statistics to support action taken
- Promote education, awareness resulting in transparency
- Conduct training (Ushers, Altar Guild, Staff, Nursery, Instructors) on entry protocols, dismissal, and other relevant procedures.
COVID-19 EVENT DISCLOSURE AND SCREENING FORM

Church/Organization: ____________________________________________
Event/Activity: ________________________________________________
Date of Event: _________________________________________________
Name of Participant: ____________________________________________
Phone Number: _________________________________________________
Email Address: _________________________________________________

Considering recent events, the health and wellbeing of our community is our paramount concern. Therefore, all participants at the above event are required to sign one of these forms and agree to voluntarily assume any risk of physically participating at this event.

Before attending, you agree that:

1. I understand my attendance and participation in the above event can pose a risk of COVID-19 or other contagious or infectious diseases to me, and if I am a high-risk person, as defined by the CDC, I should stay home and avoid participation;
2. If I have been recently exposed to COVID-19, I understand that I may pose a risk to others.
3. I agree that none of the following applies to me:
   a. To my knowledge, I have not been in close or proximate contact with anyone who has had symptoms of COVID-19 in the past 14 days.
   b. I have not tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 14 days.
   c. I have not experienced symptoms of COVID-19 in the past 14 days, including but not limited to fever, fatigue, difficulty breathing, or dry cough.
4. If there is an outbreak, my information may be shared with Public Health officials to engage in an approved contact tracing program. I understand that my information will be saved, and my information may be released to such Public Health Officials in the event it is needed for such a program.
5. I agree to follow all social distancing protocols in place at this event or activity and agree to wear a face mask while attending this event.

Your participating in person at this event is conditioned upon your acceptance and agreement to the above.

Thank you for helping us keep our community safe and healthy, we are all in this together!

My Temperature Today is:___________________

Signature: _______________________________ Date: ________________