

CHURCH OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Episcopal Parish on Vashon



REOPENING PLAN

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR THE
REOPENING OF CHURCH OF THE HOLY SPIRIT
DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC, 2020-2021

Amended plan approved by Bishop's office 12-10-2020

EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE HOLY SPIRIT
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Background/ letter from rector and rector's warden/ greeting:

Church of the Holy Spirit congregants,

October 19th, 2020

As you know, the Church of the Holy Spirit has been officially closed for worship and meetings. Under the direction of Governor Inslee, Washington State has shuttered in response to the SARS-CoV-2, the virus responsible for the Covid-19 disease. This novel virus is more virulent than the flu and also has a higher mortality rate. People particularly at risk include those 65 years of age or older, those with compromised immune function, those with diabetes, heart or lung disease (including asthma), and obese individuals. That said, anyone of any age, with or without these co-morbidities, can become infected, and people can become infected and be entirely asymptomatic for many days.

The purpose of this document is to set forth a plan for reopening from phase 2, into 3 and 4. Given that almost all of our congregation is older, we do not anticipate opening for worship until phase 4, but we may possibly begin in phase 3. In phase 2, we are and will continue live-streaming, and we anticipate having live-streaming alongside in-person worship as we re-open. Our goal as a congregation is never to turn people away from worshipping in person, if that is their desire; and, we want to continue our online modality if people are not ready to participate with in-person worship.

This plan has been completed by the rector and rector's warden in partnership with the reopening committee (Pam Held, Susie Kirchner and Anna Swain) and approved by the vestry, before being sent to the bishop and the diocesan chancellor for approval.

Blessed be,

Sarah Colvin, Rector

Anna Swain, Rector's Warden

Building considerations-

The building has simply two heaters which are forced air (one for the upstairs— sanctuary and offices, and one for the lower level- fellowship hall, library, kitchen, nursery and children's education room) , and ceiling fans in the sanctuary. There is no existing way to make the recommended number of air exchanges. The ceiling fans will stay turned off for now. When meetings in the lower level are taking place, all doors will be open. When we begin worship in phase 3 or 4, as many windows as comfortable and the doors to the sanctuary will be open. **Masks shall be worn, (further details below).**

During phase 2, Live-streaming:

Worship team- Our worship team typically consists of priest, live stream engineer (often the priest's spouse), bell ringer, organist/ pianist, music director (functioning as cantor). Every person is masked except the priest (when speaking), who is over 6 feet away. The cantor stays masked when singing. On occasion there are two people who come to serve as bell ringers (depending on the communication between them). Also occasionally there is a lay officiant or lay live-stream engineer as "substitutes." Generally this means that there are between 4 and 6 people total on any Sunday morning.

Any meetings that occur at the church will be less than 25% occupancy and socially distanced with face masks required. If at all possible, the meetings will be held outside. If this is not feasible, Zoom meetings are always available.

Preparation for worship in Phase 3

1. **Building-** The pews will be wiped down, disinfected and deep cleaned following CDC guidelines. The hymnals, prayer books, tissue boxes, as well as all paper handouts, (such as Day by Day), will be collected and stored for later use. Tissue boxes will be moved from the pews to the entrance of the sanctuary, along with a trash can. All music, readings and prayers of the people are currently sent by email as PDFs. People who choose to worship in person will be instructed to bring their worship materials and take them home. Note that COVID-19 safety information and requirements CDC and DOH (and Vashon Medical Response Corps) must be visibly posted inside and outside the church building, sanctuary and Bennett hall.

2. **Prior to worship, each day-**As people are admitted to the sanctuary each Sunday, two "ushers" will collect contact tracing forms which can be obtained by email or downloaded from the website. On site forms will be made available with disinfected ("clean") pens and "dirty" pens after use, in different jars. If the forms are not complete, the individuals will not be admitted. Forehead temperatures will be obtained and recorded with a touch-less thermometer. The temperature should be less than 100.4. If at or above 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit, the person will not be admitted. In addition, a log will be kept of the participants, so that if a form is misplaced, there is also a listing of individuals. Congregants will need to bring their own music, readings, and

prayer books. The pews will be marked to signify socially distanced spacing at or greater than 6'. No more than 25% occupancy of the sanctuary will be allowed. Family units of 2+ people can sit side by side in a pew. Everyone will be required to wear a mask. If anyone refuses to wear a mask, the person(s) will be turned away. Disposable masks will be available for use should someone forget or not have a mask. If a person removes her/ his mask once admitted to the sanctuary, the person will be asked to re-mask, but if they refuse, the service will be stopped by the officiant and all will leave the building.

The floor will be marked on the floor and extending to the sidewalk, so that if attendees must stand in line to enter, they are physically distanced by 6'.

There will be no physical passing of the offertory plate. The plate will be placed in one place, so that people can make gifts and we will continue to encourage online giving.

Contact tracing forms will be kept for 21 days and then discarded. Should someone test positive for Covid-19, we will contact county health officials. The name of the individual will be kept confidential. *(NB That is a hoot on Vashon; but, it won't be the church that breaks the confidence.)*

During worship, although our COVID-19 posters say otherwise, we will continue with a cantor singing all of worship, and we will not pursue congregational singing until an effective vaccine is widely available, and it is permitted under Washington State requirements. (Currently it is not.)

Bathrooms- Only the upstairs bathroom will be available for use. The bathroom is professionally sanitized weekly, and sanitary wipes will be available for spot cleaning between uses. Protocols for sanitizing the restroom after use will be posted in the restroom, including the number permitted (typically one only).

Communion and Baptism will be conducted as found per the Bishop's customary, in the appendix. The screening form is also found in the appendix.

For communion, (in order to facilitate traffic flow): people will come down the aisle to the altar, maintaining 6' spacing. Once the element(s) is/ are received, the participants will return to their seats through the side door, through the offices, narthex and back to the sanctuary, while maintaining social distancing throughout the process.

There will not be any "virtual communion", drive-by communion or otherwise. A prayer for spiritual communion voiced as a collective will be offered during the service.

Soap and/ or hand sanitizer will be widely available for before and after worship. (although gloves will be provided for ushers if desired.)

3. **After worship-** The pews, and all high touch surfaces (including the entry/ check-in table) will be wiped down again and disinfected as per CDC guidelines.

Additional information for Phase 4

We will continue with those items as outlined in for Phase 3 above. As per the Bishop's instruction, when/ if that time comes, the wine of communion will be available. Protocols that allow this will be followed. When we are able, we will consider increasing attendance to 50% capacity, following the Washington State Guidelines.

(Again: Communion and Baptism protocols are found in the appendix.)

Appendix

1. Sample form
2. Communion protocol
3. Baptism protocol

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. 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, or attended any gatherings in which the Washington State guidelines were not followed.
 - b. I have NOT tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 (the virus which causes 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 participation 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!

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Protocols and Guidelines for the distribution of Eucharist through Phase III.

- 1. Proper precautions and all PPE and distancing guidelines should be followed by all in the chain of work. Altar Guild, and all in the chain need to carefully sanitize all surfaces, wash and sanitize hands, wear masks, etc. All linens, including the pall should be cleaned thoroughly after each use and certainly before each use.*
- 2. Everyone in the service, and in the altar party, should always wear masks. Only the one speaking at any time may remove their mask.*
- 3. The Presider alone will set the table. Try to keep all other hands out of this, including any altar assistants. This includes bringing items from the credence table. The Presider should simply go to retrieve all the elements, vessels, etc.*
- 4. Presider should vigorously wash and sanitize hands before the service, and multiple times throughout the service, most especially just before setting the table and beginning the consecration prayer. This should not be ceremonial washing but vigorous washing.*
- 5. In setting the table, the Presider should use the pall to cover all wafers, and only expose the priest host. If you want to use an additional covering you may but at least the pall. The main point here is to stop droplets that may come from the Presider.*
- 6. 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 are then placed at least 6 inches apart in a line around the side and front of the altar. Presider should make every effort not to touch the linen if possible.*
- 10. If there are steps or a concern about accessibility you can consider another table put at floor level upon which the Presider could also place wafers. This could also be used in larger settings to offer multiple access points to communion.*
- 11. After Presider has placed these first wafers on the table, the ushers can begin to allow the congregants to come forward one at a time, all the*

while keeping social distance. You might consider putting marks with tape on the floor to show six feet distance and offer some guidance.

- 12. Before approaching the altar EVERY PERSON receiving should sanitize their hands, allowing them to dry, before going forward.*
- 13. Every person should take one wafer, and NOT consume it until back at their seat. At that point they can remove their mask and consume the wafer. If possible, sanitizer could be in every pew or aisle so that people could sanitize after consumption if possible and if desired.*
- 14. You are highly encouraged NOT to use real bread during this time. If you choose to you must follow the above guidelines but can only distribute by putting bread into a dixie cup or similar.*
- 15. There is to be no wine offered to anyone other than the Presider until at least Phase IV. More guidelines will come as we get to that phase.*

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.