

## **St. Paul's Comprehensive Plan for In Person Gatherings COVID-19 Control, Mitigation & Recovery**

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 how it flourishes. Good science has discovered that COVID-19 is more contagious than the influenza virus; more people die from it.

As followers of the risen Christ, we are charged with loving God with all our hearts, souls, minds, 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, St. Paul's Episcopal Church will adopt the following protocols to ensure we are loving our neighbors.

The following is a plan that has been created to be used both by our congregation and any group or organization that uses our building. We anticipate this plan will change and need updating, therefore each iteration is marked with a version. This is version 2 (posted on 3.18.21) per the required changes of the Diocesan Chancellor.

### **About COVID-19.**

- Infection with COVID-19 can cause illness ranging from mild to severe and, in some cases can be fatal.
- Symptoms typically include fever, sore throat, cough, shortness of breath, fatigue, muscle aches, or new loss of taste or smell.
- According to the CDC, symptoms of COVID-19 may appear in as few as 2 days or up to 14 days after exposure.
- The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person, including:
  1. Between people who are in close contact with one another (less than about 6 ft.).
  2. Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or be inhaled into the lungs.
  3. Recently scientists have proven that the aerosolized virus, from singing, woodwind playing, or speaking strongly stays in the air for some time, making transmission easy. Because of this, congregational and choral singing, how and where soloists might sing, and the usage of all woodwind instruments is prohibited in Phases 2 and 3. A soloist singing from the back of the choir area or in the balcony may be allowed with possible restrictions. In Phase 4, these restrictions will be lifted due to the generous space of our sanctuary.
  4. COVID-19 can be transmitted by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it then touching the mouth, nose, or possibly eyes, but this is not thought to be the primary way the virus spreads.

## **Signage text to be posted throughout the building.**

For the safety of all, we ask the following of you and those in your group:

- If you or anyone in your group have not been feeling well or have had a cough, fever, or other symptoms within the last 14 days, please refrain from entering the church.
- Wear a mask always covering both the mouth and the nose.
- Maintain a minimum of six feet (6 ft.) between members of other households.
- Use the hand sanitizer stations located in various locations at your convenience.
- Wait for hospitality ministers to seat you or your household group and sit only in assigned seats.
- At the end of the service, leave your seating area only when the hospitality minister asks you to do so.
- CDC and DOH safety posters have been posted throughout the building and on entry doors.

## **How will we conduct symptom monitoring?**

Prior to arriving, all people will be reminded that they must pre-screen their health:

- Any individual with a temperature of 100.4 degrees or higher must stay home.
- Anyone testing positive for COVID-19 or who has related symptoms must stay home.
- Any individual who has knowingly been in close contact with someone diagnosed as positive with COVID-19 must self-quarantine for 2 weeks (14 days) and must be symptom free prior to coming to St. Paul's.
- Upon arrival in the church, under the oversight of the COVID Supervisor, no touch thermometers will be used to record temperatures, name, and contact information, as well as vaccination status. Also, on the COVID-19 Screening Questionnaire is consent against liability to worship at St. Paul's. (See Appendix A)

## **What are general COVID Control and Mitigation Requirements?**

- There will be a COVID Supervisor at all events. It will be the responsibility of the COVID Supervisor to ensure that all persons in their gathering are following these guidelines.
- The COVID Supervisor will ensure that all persons are complying with this plan and the St. Paul's Gathering Checklist. (See Appendix B)
- The COVID Supervisor will fill out the St. Paul's Gathering Checklist.
- When people arrive, they will check in by filling out the COVID-19 Questionnaire and Release form; sanitized pens will be available.
- Everyone who fills out a form will get a sticker. Throughout the gathering, the COVID Supervisor will check people for stickers.
- People standing in line to enter must socially distance from one another. Any place where people may need to stand in line, markings will be placed on the ground to show 6 ft. distancing.

## What is our Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) plan?

- All persons must bring their own PPE (Personal Protective Equipment).
- Face coverings (cloth or purchased masks that cover the nose and mouth) are required at all times. We will have some extra facial coverings available as needed.
- The sanctuary has been prepared for re-gathering by the removal of all Books of Common Prayer, Hymn Books, Bibles, and materials we usually have in place to keep the children occupied.
- Unfortunately, with the needed painting of the sanctuary and the replacement of the roof, we haven't had the funds to buy chairs but hope to replace the pews in the future. Our pews are movable and will be spaced in such a way to allow family groupings and at least 6 ft. of distance between individual parishioners.
- We will not be using bulletins until the pandemic is over. We have large TV screens for projection of the service bulletin, which have been in place for over eight years.

## How will we ensure on-location physical distancing?

- All persons must maintain a 6 ft. clearance from other persons. Persons of the same family household may sit/stand next to each other.
- Social Distancing Posters shall be posted, as well as floor markings when standing in line for check in, communion reception, or those using the bathrooms.
- The COVID Supervisor and their assistants shall help to maintain social distancing and remind the people of the social distancing informational posters which are posted both outside as well as inside the church.
- The COVID Supervisor will monitor seating in the sanctuary for safety.
- A designated person will monitor bathrooms and make sure that capacity is limited to no more than one person or one family unit. (Only applicable when bathrooms are available to the public) Once we open, the protocols for restroom use will be posted in the restroom and sanitizing materials available to those who use the room.

## How will we ensure appropriate hygiene?

We will post, in areas visible to all persons, required hygienic practices, including:

- Do not to touch your face with unwashed hands or with gloves.
- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces in restrooms.
- Cover your mouth and nose with your elbow when coughing or sneezing.
- Other hygienic recommendations by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

## **How will we ensure appropriate sanitation?**

- Soap and running water are abundantly available in all four restrooms on the first floor. After coughing, sneezing, or blowing their nose, all persons shall be encouraged to immediately sanitize their hands, then leave to wash hands with soap and water.
- Spray sanitizer is available (water+90% alcohol) for spraying down all high touch surfaces in all restrooms after each use.
- Alcohol-based hand sanitizers with greater than 60% ethanol or 70% isopropanol can also be used and will be available at the entrance narthex of the Church as well as in every pew. These bottles are labeled Holy Hand Sanitizer and are readily replenished. Tissue boxes are in every pew as well.
- Tissues and trash receptacles are available in the narthex.

## **How will we handle incident reporting, should it be necessary?**

If there is a case of exposure or infection from COVID-19 identified at a church gathering, we will consult Kitsap County health officials directly to determine the best way forward.

At a minimum, this would include communication to those who participated in the event, conveying the health officials' advice on quarantining and/or testing; providing information for contact tracing if so advised; enacting additional safety and cleaning in the Church building; potential re-closing until a future time, should it be deemed warranted.

## **What are our location disinfection procedures?**

The Sexton has been designated to clean and disinfect all frequently touched areas during and after each gathering in accordance with cleaning protocols.

## **How shall we conduct necessary COVID-19 safety training?**

The Rector, vestry or reopening team will train a group of people to act as either COVID Supervisors, greeter, or ushers and then at least one person per group will be assigned for every indoor Church gathering. (See Appendix C).

## **What is our post-exposure incident project-wide recovery plan?**

- In the event of an exposure, all of those who were in attendance where the virus was detected/present shall be notified of their potential exposure. This will be done by or under the supervision of the COVID Supervisor and in conjunction with the Kitsap County Health Department.
- Upon experiencing an exposure, no events will be planned at the facility for 14 days.
- The area(s) will undergo a deep cleaning in accordance with COVID cleaning protocols.

### **Protocols and Guidelines for the distribution of Eucharist through Phase 3.**

- Proper precautions, all PPE, and distancing guidelines should be followed by all in the chain of work in performing the Eucharist. Altar Guild and all others involved 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 before and after each use.
- Everyone in the service and in the altar party should always wear masks. Only the one speaking at any time may remove their mask, though we recognize that this may change in the months ahead.
- The Presider alone will set the table. Until such a time as it is safe and appropriate, there will be no procession to bring offerings to the altar.
- The Presider will 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. A glass bowl with hot water, soap, and disinfectant are on the altar for this purpose.
- 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 cover the pall. The main point here is to stop droplets that may come from the Presider.
- The priest host will only be touched and consumed by the Presider.
- No one else should stand near the Presider at the altar.
- Wafers are then placed at least 6 inches apart in a line around the side and front of the altar. The Presider should make every effort not to touch the linen, if possible.
- When we reopen, a table will be made available upon which the Presider will place wafers.
- After the 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 the 6 ft. social distance. Before approaching the altar, EVERY PERSON receiving a wafer should sanitize their hands allowing them to dry before going forward.
- 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.
- The Presider will consume the priest host after all have received their wafer.

We have been highly encouraged NOT to use real bread during this time. There is to be no wine offered to anyone other than the Presider until at least Phase 4.

### **Protocol for administering baptism through Phase 3.**

- For baptism, only one Presider is allowed for all manual acts, blessing the water, baptizing, anointing, etc.
- Water should not be put into the font until the actual blessing of the water.
- Only the Presider may touch the water; children are not allowed to play in the water at this time.
- The Presider will vigorously wash their hands and sanitize before the Blessing of the Water and will repeat this action before and after each baptism.
- 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 this

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specific use.

- If there are multiple baptisms, there are a couple of options when baptizing.
  1. The Presider may take water in their hands, move away from over the font, and pour the water over the candidate's head.
  2. Or, they 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.
- Only the Presider anoints, wearing a mask.
- Candles should either not be used during this time, OR you may light the candle, show it to the person then have it taken to the Altar Guild room to be blown out, cooled, sanitized and replaced in its box.
- During this time there is to be no sprinkling of the congregation with the font water used for baptisms. Only use the water set aside in the beginning.
- The water in all bowls and the font should be discarded BEFORE the ending of the service.
- Prior to the baptism, those receiving baptisms could send a brief link to the congregants where they could download a card with print that includes the line, "Will you who witness these vows do all in your power to support this person in his/her life in Christ? We will." Ask congregants 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.

**APPENDIX A**

**ENTRANCE FORMS FOR INDIVIDUAL USE**

**COVID-19 Screening Questionnaire and Release Form**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

You are responsible for checking your temperature before entering church each Sunday.

***If you answer yes to any of the questions below, or if you have an elevated temperature, do not enter the building further.***

1. What is your temperature today? If not taken at home, take now.

Recorded at home: \_\_\_\_\_

If not, recorded at church: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Do you have a fever or symptoms of a respiratory infection (e.g. cough, sore throat, or shortness of breath)?

\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

3. Have you travelled outside the U.S. or internationally in the last 14 days?

\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

4. Have you had any contact with an individual with suspected of having, or having been diagnosed with COVID-19?

\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

Name (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Vaccinated? \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

We are glad that you have chosen to worship with us today. While we have taken all necessary precautions to ensure everyone's safety, we request your acknowledgment that you will NOT hold St. Paul's Episcopal Church responsible if you contract COVID-19 while involved in any activities here.

**Please circle one**      AGREE      DISAGREE

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for sharing this time with us at St. Paul's!! We are sorry for any inconvenience and appreciate your patience and understanding.

Initials of COVID Supervisor or Volunteer \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX B

### St. Paul's Gathering Checklist for COVID Supervisors

Please complete this checklist every time you meet. Leave it on this clipboard with the registry of names who attended the meeting. Thank you!

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Group: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of designated COVID-19 Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

(NOTE: Check marks indicate a "YES" response; otherwise make note of exceptions).

1. \_\_\_ Was everyone informed prior to arriving that they must prescreen their health?
2. \_\_\_ Has each person filled out the disclosure form, gotten their temperature taken, and the form kept and given to the St. Paul's Office Manager?
3. \_\_\_ Did the COVID Supervisor check people for stickers to assure everyone has checked in?
4. \_\_\_ Do you have a copy of the "St. Paul's Comprehensive COVID-19 Control, Mitigation & Recovery Plan"? A copy of this plan must be available for inspection by state and local authorities every time you gather.
5. \_\_\_ Are necessary COVID-19 safety and information posters visibly posted?
6. \_\_\_ Is everyone wearing a face mask before, during, and after/leaving the gathering?
7. \_\_\_ Is everyone refraining from physical contact?
8. \_\_\_ Is there soap and running water available to everyone?
9. \_\_\_ Is there disinfectant/sanitizer available in at least two locations of the gathering space?
10. \_\_\_ Are all parties sitting at least 6 feet apart? Those in the same family may sit closer.
11. \_\_\_ Are tissues and trash cans available in at least two locations of the gathering space?
12. \_\_\_ Were all "high touch areas" cleaned and disinfected after the gathering?
13. \_\_\_ Did we maintain a log of the names of everyone who attended?
14. \_\_\_ (Only applicable when bathrooms are available to the public) Is there someone ensuring that only the number of people in each bathroom matches the amount of stalls and those waiting in line are standing 6 ft. apart?

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Noted exceptions: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



## APPENDIX C

### WELCOMING PEOPLE INTO THE NAVE

#### Hospitality Ministry

Upon reopening of the church building for public worship, hospitality ministers will be needed to work with the Covid Supervisor. Before the service, hospitality ministers will be present in the narthex, and just inside the nave doors. These hospitality ministers will share responsibilities of greeter, seat assignment ministers, and usher. Responsibilities include checking people in, assisting with seating people, as well as monitoring restroom activity.

During the service, some hospitality ministers will stay in the narthex to monitor restroom activity and greet latecomers. Other hospitality ministers will be stationed throughout the nave to provide assistance as needed. During a worship service, the Altar Guild designee will be present to ensure volunteers arrive on time to facilitate on the required steps for worship (sound/video techs, readers, volunteers, etc.).

#### Greeter Responsibilities

Greeters will be the first to welcome people to the church for worship. Even though greeters will always have masks on, **their smiles will show through!** Greeters should be welcoming and inviting to all who join us and should not be afraid to help those who may seem confused or overwhelmed by all the changes.

Greeters will:

- Make people feel welcome through body language, communicating, and making eye contact. Shaking hands and physically touching others (hugging) is not allowed. All people must maintain social distance from each other.
- Make sure that all congregants have masks prior to entering the church (provide masks if needed) and make them aware of locations of sanitizing stations for their hands before putting masks on.
- Take the temperatures of each congregant. Anyone who has a fever of 100.4 degrees or greater will not be permitted to attend worship and asked to leave immediately.
- Guide the entering congregants to form a line for entry into the church.
- Answer any questions concerning procedures, protocol, seating, etc. and what they are aware of the posted informational posters.

#### Seat Assignment Minister Responsibilities

- Welcome the congregants to the parish with the same techniques suggested above for greeters.
- Ask a member of each congregant group who has registered online, the screening questions relating to COVID-19 symptoms and exposure for all members of their group (See Appendix A) and record responses on the list. A different screening questionnaire including the COVID-19 symptoms declaration is required for those who signed in using the telephone who are walk-ins, which must be physically signed.
- Inform the congregant group of their seating assignment and note on the seating assignment

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list that the congregant group joined the gathering making sure to note the names of all in attendance.

- Direct congregant groups to an usher, or to wait for an usher in the waiting area.

### **Usher responsibilities**

- Welcome the congregants to the church with the same techniques suggested above for greeters.
- Guide congregant groups and make sure they sit in their assigned seats.
- Monitor the situation in the nave before, during, and after the service, and provide aid to those who may need it.
- Provide guidance to congregant groups as they exit the church safely.
- In the event of a medical emergency, the hospitality ministers will immediately notify the Verger or other clergy staff person, and the guidelines in the emergency preparedness manual will be implemented for the specific situation.

### **Protecting Volunteers and Staff**

The safety and health of staff and volunteers in all ministries is a major priority. To that end, the parish 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:

- Cloth and disposable masks are available if you do not have one. The use of a mask is required at all times.
- 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.
- In the case of exposure, volunteers and staff should not serve two Sundays in a row.

### **Document Training Agenda and Attendance**

All volunteers will be trained in each of the three roles defined above (greeter, seat assignment minister, usher) and will go through a training facilitated by the Rector, Vestry or members of the reopening team as empowered by the Rector, including a Zoom training before reopening. There will also be an in-person training that each volunteer will be asked to go through before serving at an actual service. This training will likely occur just prior to volunteering at your first service. It will be stressed during training that all volunteers will need to be welcoming and communicative and to set good examples for others.

**A copy of this plan is available for inspection by state and local authorities.**

Most recent update 3.27.21