

June 18, 2020

Dear St. Charles Episcopal Church Family,

This plan summarizes many hours of conversation among our vestry and staff regarding the best practices of living together faithfully during the time of the Covid 19 global pandemic. We have based this plan on "A New Season: Guidelines for Re-Entering Our Church Buildings" provided by our Episcopal Diocese of Chicago on May 26th, 2020. As of the writing of our plan for resuming in-person ministry at SCEC, our region of Illinois is in phase 3 of a 5 phase Restore Illinois plan.

Please know that throughout the Covid 19 pandemic we are seeking to conduct ministry in such a way as to protect the most vulnerable to contracting the Covid 19 coronavirus: people over the age of 65, and those with medical conditions that make them especially vulnerable to the virus. This is in alignment with our baptismal vow to seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving our neighbor as ourselves. It is our intention to be cautious and follow all best practices as recommended by our public health department to avoid being a site of transmission of the Covid 19 coronavirus. It is also our intention to continue to work diligently to provide connection and hope through virtual forms of communication, the phone, and when it is appropriate and in accordance with our plan, in-person meetings.

This document has been written together with the Rector by the Vestry of St. Charles Episcopal Church. Discernment for the resuming of in-person ministry in the building, on the grounds, and at off-site locations (homes, restaurants, parks, etc.) is to be made in consultation with the Rector. This plan and timeline is subject to change based on the recommendations of the Illinois Department of Health and the Episcopal Diocese of Chicago. This plan will go into effect on Sunday, June 21, 2020.

Thank you for your faithfulness in following the way of Christ Jesus during this unprecedented moment in history.

Faithfully,

Rev. Stacy+

Guidelines for Phase 3:

Worship:

Live streaming of worship services will continue being broadcast from the sanctuary of SCEC when possible. Services are not open to the public.

The primary worship service will be Morning Prayer.

When appropriate supplies allow, there will be occasional services of the Holy Eucharist. Elements will be consecrated to be distributed through curbside pick-up, and when necessary home delivery.

Holy Eucharist will be either host only, or an all-in-one pre-sealed communion cup and host. There will be no distribution of wine. Homemade bread will not be used.

No live singing is allowed.

No wind instruments are allowed, such as woodwinds or brass.

Face coverings/masks must be worn by all present in worship at all times.

Weddings, funerals, and baptisms may take place, but with a total group size of no more than 10, including the clergy.

The Altar Guild will work in groups of no more than 2 in either sacristy at one time. Face coverings/masks must be worn at all times, and care taken to sanitize all surfaces.

All books and other items will be removed from the pews.

All extraneous items including name tags and leaflets will be removed from public spaces.

Immediately following each service all areas touched and utilized will be sanitized.

Administration

The parish offices will be open to staff only. Staff will stagger times so as to avoid being in the building at the same time. When staff members are present at the same time they will work in their offices with the doors closed. When in the same room they will maintain a minimum of a six foot physical distance and wear face masks. Hand washing and sanitizing supplies will be available for each office and workspace.

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Parishioners and guests are asked not to enter the building for any reason without calling first for an appointment.

Staff will continue to work from home as much as possible.

Pastoral Care

In person pastoral care visits may resume to low-risk parishioners, utilizing safety practices. It will be left to the discretion of the Rector to schedule in person pastoral care visits. The primary mode of pastoral care will continue to be via phone and video conferencing.

Essential Outreach Ministries

Only essential outreach ministries will be performed during phase three, with the number of volunteers and staff present limited to a total of 10 persons. All safety guidelines must be observed including wearing of masks, social distancing, and frequent handwashing and sanitizing. These guidelines are to be observed whether the food is prepared and served at SCEC kitchen or off site.

The **only** essential outreach ministries are: Free Spaghetti Dinner curbside pick-up only; Hased House lunch and breakfast prep; Trinity Sandwich board lunch prep; Heart to Heart food distribution.

Small Group Meetings and Ministries

All small group meetings are encouraged to continue to meet virtually throughout phase 3.

Small group meetings and ministries of 10 people or fewer may meet outdoors only. Before the group meets, they should consult with the Rector at least 48 hours prior for a conversation about best practices.

Small groups should have a plan to allow for virtual participation.

Additional Guidelines during phase 4

All guidelines for phase 3 will continue to be observed, with some minor changes. Virtual meeting and worship options will continue to be maintained for all ministries and small groups. And some ministries and small groups may continue to meet only virtually.

1. Face coverings and physical distancing (six foot minimum) remain the norm.
2. The only interior space that may be utilized for meetings is Ludtke Hall. The parish library will be closed.
3. Gatherings of 50 or fewer will be allowed for worship and meetings.
4. There is to be no food or beverages served before or after worship or at meetings and small groups.
5. In person education for children, youth, and adults may resume in classrooms on the lower level. All extraneous supplies will be removed prior to classes resuming.

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6. All spaces must be sanitized with particular attention to frequently touched surfaces following each in person event.
7. Community groups may resume use of Ludtke Hall with clearly written guidelines for group size, physical distancing, face coverings, and sanitation. Gatherings must be limited to 50 or fewer, whether in Ludtke Hall or on the grounds. Food and beverage service will be strongly discouraged.
8. In worship there will be no collection plate passed, it will remain stationary. And the passing of the peace will be without physical contact.

Guidelines for Phase 5

All size gatherings will be allowed.

Continued virtual worship and meeting options may continue.

A word about timelines: The timeline for moving to each phase of return will be set by the Rector in consultation with the Vestry. Our pace for moving to and from each phase, particularly when progressing forward in the phases (say phase 3 to phase 4) will not necessarily match the pace exactly of the Illinois Department of Health. We will move at a pace that makes sense for the congregation as a whole.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Q: Will online worship be maintained while in-person worship is also taking place? Including occasional curbside or home delivery of Holy Communion?

A: Yes, at least through phase 4.

Q: Will I need to make a reservation to attend worship in phase 4?

A: Yes, you will. This will allow us to conduct worship while maintaining appropriate physical distancing.

Q: Will visitors still be able to join us without a reservation in phase 4?

A: Yes, we will allow for a few extra spots at each service to accommodate visitors.

Q: Will we be having coffee hour?

A: In phase 4, no. We will ask that individuals and family groups leave the building at the direction of the health and safety ministry team and not congregate. In phase 5, yes, we will resume coffee hour with modifications for sanitary food service.

Q. Do I have to wear a mask or face covering in phases 3 and 4?

A: Yes. Everyone age 2 and older is asked to wear a face covering. We will have limited quantities of masks available for those who need one, however we ask that you bring your own face covering with you when at all possible.

Q: Will the building be sanitized after each gathering in groups 3 and 4?

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A: Yes, it is the expectation that members of small groups and ministries will make a plan to clean immediately following their gatherings, including bathroom fixtures, light switches, door knobs, and other heavily touched surfaces. There will be need of volunteers to serve on our new ministry of Health and Safety which will serve at all worship services. This team will clean after each service as well as direct the flow of traffic in and out of the building. Please contact the parish office to indicate your willingness to serve in this essential ministry.

Q: If someone contracts Covid-19 who has been at the SCEC building or another ministry site, will the congregation be notified?

A. Yes. We ask that if you should become ill that you please notify the parish office so we can communicate with the congregation at large and make decisions as needed to postpone in person meetings and worship temporarily, as well as plan for more intensive cleaning. We will ask the same of the community groups using the building.

Q: I'm not feeling well, I'm not sure if I have Covid 19 or not, should I come to an SCEC in person event as planned?

A: No, please stay home, and seek medical advice.

Q: A member of my household, work place, or someone I socialize with has been diagnosed with Covid 19, should I attend an in-person SCEC event as I planned to?

A: No. Please seek advice from the Illinois Department of Public Health or a medical provider.