



# Phased Reopening amid COVID-19

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## Christ Church + Washington Parish

### Objective

To create a phased plan of reopening of our place of worship in conjunction with the four-phase plan issued by the diocese and the four stage plan issued by the Mayor of the District of Columbia.

### Goals

To safely reopen our place of worship as guidelines allow while also embracing the moment we find ourselves in to emerge a much stronger faith community with greater capacity for ministry throughout each phase and beyond.

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## PHASE 1

**Key Characteristics of this phase include rising COVID-19 Cases, Hospitalizations and deaths, and the Mayor has limited public gatherings.**

*It is understood that there is always the possibility of moving back into Phase 1, whenever the key characteristics above are occurring in the community at the direction of Diocesan or District of Columbia authorities.*

### Christ Church's Protocols under Phase 1

#### Building Use

- The buildings are closed.
  - Staff and key volunteers work remotely, except for essential tasks.

#### Worship

- One service is live streamed in accordance with Diocesan guidelines, with social distance and safety regulations observed.
- Other services are offered online through Zoom.

#### Other activities

- Sunday School, Adult Forum, social gatherings, meetings, and similar activities take place via telephone or online.
- Pastoral Care is done via telephone or online.

## PHASE 2

**Civic: Authorities allow for limited numbers of persons to gather. Numbers of known infections and deaths have declined in the District for fourteen (14) consecutive days.**

**Diocese: Authorizes Significantly limited Live In-person and Public Use of Property**

*It is understood that decisions on moving to Phase 2 will be at the direction of Diocese once District of Columbia authorities have moved to Phase 2 for the public.*

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## Christ Church's Protocols under Phase 2

### Building Use

- The buildings may be used for in-person worship, as described below.
- Live-streaming of one service will continue.
- Church groups may use assigned spaces. Social distancing, mandatory mask use, and cleaning protocols will be required. Each participant must provide contact information to permit contact tracing.
- A supply of disposable masks will be available at the door of the church for those who “forget” or don’t have one. They will be instructed to wear the mask until they leave the premises and that they need to dispose of the mask off the property (e.g. at home, in their car, in a public trash receptacle).
- Staff may return to offices, but remote working is still encouraged. Masks are required in shared areas, and guidelines for social distancing and cleaning and disinfecting apply.

### Worship

**The beginning of our first entry into Phase 2 will not look that different from the first phase as far as worship is concerned.** Prior to opening the sanctuary to in-person worship, live-streaming equipment and lighting needs to be removed from the pews and nave floor in the worship space. All equipment needs to be installed in its permanent location before we open the sanctuary to public worship. Internet service also needs to be upgraded to better accommodate live-streaming and increased use of smartphone/tablets during worship.

Also, prior to holding in-person services, each congregant must sign the Covenant for Regathering in Worship before attending worship for the first time. The Covenant will be posted on the website for digital download and emailed to each member. It will need to be digitally signed and emailed, or printed, signed, then mailed to the church office. When we have signed copies on hand from the majority of our members, we will move into phase 2 reopening as the facility is ready.

We will add outdoor services on our front lawn as the sanctuary and Parish Hall are being prepared for in-person worship. We will abide by the distancing regulations and limitations set by the DC Places of Worship guidelines which state that we may “gather 50% of our occupancy or 100 people whichever is fewer.”<sup>1</sup> We will request that everyone brings their own chairs and that they sanitize them before and after each service. Cleaning supplies, (CDC approved) spray and paper towels plus instructive signage, will be provided. We will provide a few chairs for those who need them and they will be sanitized before and after each use.

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<sup>1</sup> Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19): Guidelines for Places of Worship. DC|Health Government of the District of Columbia, [www.coronavirus.dc.gov/phasetwo](http://www.coronavirus.dc.gov/phasetwo), updated June 16, 2020.

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Live streaming of one worship service continues. Once the live streaming equipment installation is completed and the sanctuary is prepared, we will begin indoor in-person services as well in the sanctuary.

Based on Diocesan and DC guidelines, limited indoor worship services will be allowed. The number of people allowed at any worship service will be limited to how many people we may accommodate, while keeping 6 feet distance between family groups and individuals. A family group is defined as people living in the same household. We have mapped out seating capacity of the sanctuary with social distancing several ways using paper representations of seated people. We can accommodate from around 52 in the nave if only singles and couples attend, or up to 75 in the nave if we have more family groups of 4+, with a total of 90 including worship leaders in the chancel and additional spaced seating the back of the nave (90 is 50% of our legal occupancy).

Seating for indoor services will require an expanded role for ushers as they will have to carefully seat people. We will be training staff and ushers to get ready for in-person worship.

Masks will be required for entry and must be worn at all times within the building. A supply of disposable masks will be available at the door of the church for those who “forget” or don’t have one. They will be instructed to wear the mask until they leave the premises and that they need to dispose of the mask off the property (e.g. at home, in their car, in a public trash receptacle).

Our cleaning company will deep-clean indoor worship space following Sunday services. All hymnals, prayerbooks, and kneelers will be removed from the pews. Service bulletins will be provided for electronic download through our website, and we will also provide printed copies per Diocesan guidelines.

Restrictive practices for celebrations of the Eucharist would be in effect. We propose using pre-consecrated wafers for Eucharist in one kind. We will do a hybrid service of Eucharist for those present and spiritual communion for those participating online. We will change our distribution practice to align with the diocesan guidelines of no kneeling, single line movement to receive the wafers, with congregants moving in one direction only.

There will be no congregational singing until further notice. Soloists/cantors, double-distanced (12 feet apart), is acceptable.

Mid-week worship and small formation groups will be allowed to meet on church property with physical distancing and within occupancy limits. All gatherings will be required to request space

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through the Church staff. The Church office will maintain the master calendar for all scheduled activities to regulate building use, times, and numbers of people.

### Other Worship Protocols

- All people entering the building must provide current contact information in order that contact tracing may be performed if necessary.
- Signage will be maintained in place regarding Covid-19 symptoms, hygiene etc. Use of hand sanitizer is required and will be provided by the church at all entrance points. Worshipers known to be infectious, sick or symptomatic, are not to attend. Worshipers with underlying health risks are discouraged from attending services.
- Worshippers will enter through one door to help manage seating and traffic flow. Only the main entrance will be available for entering the sanctuary, except for handicap access. The side entrance to the sanctuary from the Parish Hall will be used for handicap initial entry only. Bathrooms will only be available for emergencies. Congregants will be asked to “go before they come to the church.” CDC-approved spray and paper towels will be available in each bathroom, with signage instructing anyone using that bathroom to spray and wipe all surfaces touched (faucets, doorknobs, flush handles, toilet seats).
- Communicants may come forward in a single line to receive standing (no kneeling at the altar rail). Wafers are to be distributed by the presider and Eucharistic ministers wearing gloves, or by placing elements on the table or altar for people to pick up themselves.
- There will be no touching of others allowed except by family units.
- Online giving will be encouraged, especially the use of text giving for “plate” givers. An offering plate will be placed at the entrance to the sanctuary for those that wish to give by check or cash.
- Baptisms and anointing of the sick will be determined on a case by case basis. Masks and gloves will be required. In the case of baptisms, only one family group per service will be allowed.
- Weddings and funerals must be in compliance with all protocols. No food receptions following these services will be permitted.

### Other Activities

- Small ministry groups for formation, prayer, Bible study, etc. will be permitted to meet on church property, but will be encouraged to continue to meet virtually, or with virtual option, so as to be able to include those in high-risk categories. No social gatherings will be permitted.
- Pastoral Care will still be restricted especially for those in high-risk categories and is limited to telephone or video conferencing unless approved by the bishop.
- Outreach activities may resume, but only as consistent with DC and Diocesan guidelines.

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## Cleaning Protocols

- One deep cleaning per week after Sunday services.
- All groups meeting indoors will be required and trained to clean used spaces, including bathroom touch up, doorknobs, etc. along the route in and out of the building.
- Church sexton will clean on Fridays in preparation for Sunday services.

## PHASE 3

**Civic: Authorities continue to ease restrictions on public gatherings. Numbers of known infections and deaths have fallen to near zero in the district. Widespread testing and tracking.**

**Diocese: Authorizes Moderately limited In-person Public Worship Service and Use of Property**

*It is understood that there is always the possibility of moving backwards to previous phases, whenever the situation in the community warrants it at the direction of Diocesan or DC authorities. It is also understood that there are still many unanswered questions that may affect the protocols outlined in our Phase 3 reopening plan. These guidelines are subject to revision as new information becomes available and/or at the direction of Diocesan or civic authorities.*

### Christ Church's Protocols Under Phase 3

This phase would see a resumption of an additional indoor Sunday worship services, with one service still being live-streamed/virtual. We would also begin to see greater opportunities for social activity on a larger scale.

- The use of masks would become optional.
- Size of altar party can increase and eucharistic guidelines may be relaxed.
- There would be no restrictions on baptisms, funerals, or weddings except for maintaining other protocols established for this phase.
- All COVID-19 signage will remain in place, and all sanitation practices are to continue.
- In person social activities will be allowed only with foods that are professionally prepared and/or pre-packaged.
- In person pastoral care will resume with precautions of masks and gloves use with anyone who has underlying conditions, or symptoms of a possibly communicable illness.
- Eucharistic Visitors will be allowed to resume Eucharistic Visits with proper use of masks and gloves.
- Staff may return to work in the building and are not required to wear masks or maintain social distancing. Accommodations will still be encouraged for high-risk persons.
- Congregational gatherings may resume within guidelines established by civic authorities and Diocesan guidelines.

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**OUTSIDE GROUPS:** During this phase, outside groups will be allowed to utilize spaces in the building as long as established social distance guidelines are maintained and groups remain within capacity guidelines. Outside groups will be required to pay the cost (fees) of cleaning the buildings to ensure our standard of disinfection after their meetings or use of the space.

## **PHASE 4**

**Civic: Authorities have allowed all public gatherings. An antivirus has been developed and is widely available. No reported new cases of pandemic infections in the district for at least two weeks. Widespread testing and tracking.**

**Diocese: Authorizes All Live In-person Public Worship Service Allowed with Few Limitations**

### **Christ Church's Protocols under Phase 4**

We will now resume all in-person worship services, with at least one-service live-streamed. The numbers of worshipers will be limited by legal occupancy only. Hygiene standards that have been set in previous phases will continue to be used. Use of masks would be optional, and there would be no restriction on the Eucharist.

Virtual worship would continue alongside in-person worship. All meetings/studies would continue to offer a virtual option. Small group gatherings would return to normal as well as all restrictions on pastoral care would be lifted.

### **Other Protocols**

- No restriction on use of Holy Water basins or baptismal font.
- The use of the altar rail will be permitted.
- The Passing of the Peace may resume. Words, hugs, and elbow touching are allowed--but no handshakes.
- Offerings may be collected, but electronic giving will be strongly encouraged.
- For Eucharistic celebrations, traditional practices may resume, and wine can be distributed to all who desire it, except that worshipers may not intinct (dipping the bread into the cup). If intinction is desired, the clergy distributing bread or a eucharistic server dips the wafer into the consecrated wine and places it on the tongue of the worshiper.
- Coffee hours, potluck meals and other community building activities may resume.
- In addition to making hand-sanitizers widely available, we will still wipe down all doorknobs and handles before and after each church service.
- Books of Common Prayer, Hymnals etc. may be paced back in pews. However, electronic copies of the service guides will continue to be sent out and their use encouraged as we strive to reduce the amount of paper used in our worship gatherings.
- Full use of buildings is permitted as long as sanitation guidelines are maintained.