
Christ Episcopal Church - Albert Lea, Minnesota



Plan for Re-Opening for Physical Worship

Prepared by the Christ Episcopal Church Vestry
September 9, 2020



<http://www.christchurchal.org>
204 West Fountain Street,
Albert Lea, MN 56007



STATEMENT OF INTENT

The following document outlines a plan for re-opening Christ Episcopal Church for Sunday worship in our physical space. We feel it is important to prepare for a day when it is safe for us to regather in person inside, and while we all look forward to that day, the health and safety of our congregation is our paramount concern. No gatherings at the church will be contemplated until we can do so based on the guidance of the Episcopal Church of Minnesota.

Furthermore, once permission is granted from the diocese, the vestry may still significantly postpone gatherings at the church until we feel it is safe for our congregation, taking into consideration what we know of our space and our high-risk population.

Outside services will continue for the foreseeable future. We will continue to revisit this plan, adjusting and adapting as necessary and as more information becomes available to us. But this plan will not be implemented without full consensus of the vestry that it is in the best interest of the well being of the congregation.

Questions, concerns, or comments can be directed to any member of the vestry.

Savile Lord, Senior Warden

Jeff Shaft, Vestry

Peggy Havener, Vestry

Joy Shaft, Treasurer

GENERAL GUIDELINES

The congregation will be asked to honor the following guidelines when in the church building for worship or any other reason:

Social Distancing

Maintain 6' distance from anyone not in your household

Wash Your Hands

Wash your hands frequently, and use hand sanitizer as needed

Cover Your Cough

Cough or sneeze into your elbow rather than your hands to prevent the spread of germs.

Wear Face Coverings

All staff and visitors over the age of two years old will wear a face covering when on the premises. Face coverings should be washed after each use.

Stay Home If You Are Sick

If you have a fever, cough, or any congestion; or feel like you might be sick; or live with someone that is sick or exhibiting symptoms, stay home. This applies to clergy, lay ministers, musicians, and participants.

Stay Home If You Are High-Risk

If you are vulnerable to illness, please stay home. We want to keep you safe and well. Online options are available from our friends at other congregations.

WORSHIP

ECMN has released the 3rd iteration of the ECMN Re-Gathering Planning Document on August 18th. The updates to this document center on the newly outlined plan for faith communities to move to gathering in person in faith community buildings in the months to come.

To be clear, there is no expectation that faith communities can/should/must return to their buildings.

Changes to this Document Since Previous Version (June 23rd, 2020)

We'll be looking at the 7-day positivity rate as our metric for how we'll determine which phase ECMN and individual faith communities are in.

The Building Use Task Force will accept plans for reopening church buildings in two phases.

Appendix A has been transformed into a metric that can be used to create a reopening plan for your faith community.

Additional clarification and best practices have been added to Appendix G for the practice of the Eucharist once faith communities return to in-person worship.

Reopening Church Buildings in Phase 1.5

As of August 18th, 2020, all in ECMN are still in Phase 1.5 of our Re-Gathering Plan. This means that the 7-day positivity rates are trending at or above 5% for either the state or county.

During Phase 1.5, the Building Use Task Force will now consider plans for the reopening of church buildings for use by clergy, church employees, volunteers and businesses or organizations operating in church buildings.

The Guidelines for Phase 1.5 have been updated with more specific information.

Reopening Church Buildings in Phase 2

As we look ahead and prepare to move to Phase 2, we will shift our focus to the positivity rates of both the state and county in which a faith community is situated. In order to be considered in Phase 2, the 7-day positivity rates of the state AND county must both have trended under 5%. This means that some faith communities will likely move to Phase 2 before others based on the prevalence of COVID-19 in their counties.

When a faith community is considered in Phase 2, the Building Use Task Force will consider plans for opening buildings for ministries, outside groups, and limited capacity in-person worship.

- We will block off two of every three pews. In our current configuration, this allows for about 5 pews on a side, 10 pews total.
 - Maximum total capacity in the sanctuary will be 30 at any time. Note that with social distancing standards this may be as low as 15.
 - Common worship objects will be removed from the pews to reduce touching of common objects, including hymnals, books of common prayer, and bibles.
 - Weather permitting, we will open the windows in the church during services to introduce fresh air.
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Ushers

Christ Episcopal Church does not utilize ushers. However, if we did the following expectations would be in place. Our ushers will wear masks as will all people in the sanctuary. In addition to regular usher duties, our ushers will:

- Offer hand sanitizer to people upon entry.
- Single-use printed bulletins will be placed on a table at the entry for congregants to pick up.
- A printed copy of the church directory with names and phone numbers will be present at each service so ushers can check off the people who attend. Any visitor who is not in the church directory will be asked to provide their name and phone number which will be added to the day's list.
- The offering plates will be placed at one central locations at the appropriate time in the service. In addition, donations may be mailed in.

Acolytes

If an acolyte is used, will will ensure that social distancing is observed in the altar area and that service participants are aware of the rules and procedures in this document. Our acolytes will get his own robe. Robes will be labeled with the appropriate wearer's name, and will be taken home and washed with soap and water at the conclusion of each service.

Altar Guild

We will continue with one alter guild member who rotates each month. With no social distancing possible in the sacristy, only one person at a time will be present in the sacristy.

Baptismal Font

The baptismal font will remain drained for the time being.

Passing the Peace

We will continue with the methods of passing the peace that we were observing prior to the closing of our physical worship space, without handshakes, and by encouraging the alternative of placing your hand over your heart and saying "Peace by with you." Social distancing of 6' will be maintained during this time. This will be explained in the bulletin and by our worship leader for the day.

County Positive Tracking

The church secretary will be in charge of monitoring the positive cases in the county to ensure our community remains at below 5%. This information will be posted outside the office door and communicated to the Priest in Charge on a weekly basis. If our community raises beyond that 5% in positive cases, we will suspend service until that number has fallen below 5% for a set period of time.

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Holy Eucharist

We will be administering a sealed plastic cup that has the host under one plastic cover and then grape juice under another plastic cover. Our priest will be asked to sanitize their hands before and after distributing communion. Communion will be administered by standing at the altar, approaching one pew at a time and maintaining social distancing from others. Congregants will be instructed to receive their communion at the altar, return with it to their pews, where they can adjust their masks briefly to consume it. We will remove the kneeling cushions from the altar rail, explain this procedure in the bulletin, and ask our priest to convey this prior to the invitation. In addition, hand sanitizer will be available near the altar rail for parishioners to use as they approach.

Music

Understanding that music is a cherished part of our tradition at Chris Episcopal, we will continue to have the organ as part of our church service. However, for the time being we will suspend singing in the service.

Group Recitations

Group recitations (such as psalms, the Lord's Prayer, and the Nicene Creed) are not recommended at this time. Congregants will be advised to say these prayers quietly to themselves.

OTHER GATHERINGS

Coffee Hour

Coffee hour will be suspended for the time being.

Nursery Care

Nursery care will not be provided.

Funerals and Weddings

Weddings and funerals can occur if approved by the vestry. The vestry will evaluate that the gathering can comply with state and county restrictions, and with continuing physical distancing plans discussed earlier in the document, and appoint a vestry contact for the event who will communicate these rules to those requesting to hold the event.

Eucharist Visitors and Pastoral Visits

Eucharistic and pastoral in-person visits will be suspended for the time being. Pastoral emergencies will continue to be handled by Father Henry Doyle via phone.

Small Groups

All our small groups, such as book club, will consider meeting by Zoom for the time being.

Retreats

Please see the addendum section of this document.

OFFICE

Our church is not only a place of worship but a place of business for our paid staff including our church secretary Cindi Christenson, our church musician Gail Thurnau, our church inspector Paul Minehart, and our cleaning crew Tanner and Ashley Shaft.

Cleaning of the church resumed after Labor Day, and the church has continued to have its weekly inspections. Once our plan is approved, the remaining staff will return to the church and their offices to work. The music room is the designated workspace for Gail Thurnau and the office is the designated workspace of Cindi Christenson. These areas should be accessed only by these designated employees. Note that occasionally Vestry members such as our treasurer need to access the office. As social distancing is not possible in this small room, only one person may occupy it at a time and that person shall be responsible for sanitizing all accessed surfaces from keyboards to doorknobs before leaving the space. See the Sanitation Tracker form attached, which is posted in the office space.

All staff are expected to self-screen for COVID-19 symptoms prior to entering the facility. If a staff member has a fever, frequent cough, difficulty breathing, chills, muscle pain, sore throat, recent loss of taste or smell, or if they or someone they live with with have been diagnosed with COVID-19, they are not permitted on the premises.

All staff are required to wear a mask while in the church buildings. In the event that two or more people are in the building at the same time, either church members or staff, they will maintain a 6 foot minimum distance to provide social distancing. Any staff member who is diagnosed with COVID-19 must alert the church warden immediately so that the appropriate steps can be followed. See the "Communication" section below for the appropriate form and contact information.

COVID-19 Workplace Exposure Reporting procedures have been posted outside the office and the music room. Signs advising all staff and visitors to wear masks, wash hand frequently, social distance, and stay home if they are sick are posted by every door into the facility and every restroom. A Sanitation Tracker form will be placed inside the office by the door and filled out with each office use.

SANITATION

Our facility is fully cleaned once a week. In addition, our churches has two special cleanings a week that clean doorknobs, bathrooms and office desk surfaces.

- All commonly used surfaces in narthex, nave, and chapel areas, and the sacristy need to be disinfected. These shall include door knobs, toilets, faucets, pulpits and podiums, altars, pews and seating areas. A solution of 5% bleach in water in a spray bottle can be used to clean most surfaces, with the exceptions below.
 - Wood surfaces such as the pulpit, the podium, and the pews will be disinfected with a wood safe cleaner on the EPA disinfectant list such as Lysol Multi-Surface.
 - Metal surfaces such as the chalice, doorknobs, and offertory plates will be disinfected with an appropriate cleaner on the EPA disinfectant list such as Lysol Multi-Surface.
 - Commonly used electronics including all microphones and electronic control panels will be wiped down with 70% isopropyl alcohol.
 - The bathrooms next to the kitchen will be closed for the time being.
 - The levels of hand sanitizer and necessary cleaning supplies will be verified, and refilled or ordered if necessary.
 - Robes and garments will be assigned to specific individuals. The wearer is responsible for taking them home and washing them after each use.
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COMMUNICATION

We will provide information to the congregation on the new procedures for worship and gathering using our website, our email newsletter, the church's Facebook site, and it will be printed in the bulletins. Verbal instructions will be provided regarding receiving communion and passing the peace by our priest. See the "Required Roles" section for a list of the people in charge of training staff and visitors for these procedures.

Signs will be posted at all entryways informing visitors and staff of the main requirements for attending service. Savile Lord will work to create these.

In the event that a person who has attended worship or other gathering at Christ Episcopal Church tests positive for COVID-19, all persons who attended worship at that time will be notified by the Senior Warden on behalf of the church.

REVISIONS

Once the church is open for worship, this document will be reviewed, and if necessary, revised on the third Sunday of the month at the Vestry meeting, or more often if changes in county, state, or diocesan guidelines recommend it.

ADDENDUM: SMALL GROUP GUIDELINES FOR GATHERING AT CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Christ Episcopal is not just a place of worship. Our facility offers a gathering place for smaller groups, as well as community groups outside the congregation. Groups that have the capability to continue to meet via digital means are strongly encouraged to do so. However, these are the guidelines by which all groups who do use the facility are asked to follow.

Social Distancing

Maintain 6' distance from anyone not in your household.

Wash Your Hands

Wash your hands upon entering the facility, and wash frequently (or use hand sanitizer) as needed.

Cover Your Cough

Cough or sneeze into your elbow rather than your hands to prevent the spread of germs.

Wear Face Coverings

All staff and visitors over the age of two years old will wear a face covering when on the premises. Face coverings should be washed after each use.

Stay Home If You Are Sick

If you have a fever, cough, or any congestion; or feel like you might be sick; or live with someone that is sick or exhibiting symptoms, stay home.

Stay Home If You Are High-Risk

If you are vulnerable to illness, please stay home and stay safe. High-risk individuals are strongly encouraged refrain from gathering at this time.

Avoid Shared Spaces

Avoid sharing spaces with other groups (such as kitchens and leisure areas) wherever possible.

Designate a Point Person

All groups that use the facility should appoint a person in charge of making sure participants are informed of these guidelines. Please communicate the contact information of that person to the Vestry.

TRAINING CHECKLIST

What follows is general guideline checklist for discussing COVID-19 with your appointed group. Please note that there will be more specific areas that you will want to discuss with your group regarding commonly used spaces, or objects, or job functions that will not be listed here.

- Coronaviruses are a type of virus. There are many different kinds, and some cause disease. A newly identified coronavirus has caused a worldwide pandemic of respiratory illness, called COVID-19. COVID-19 symptoms include cough, fever, shortness of breath, muscle aches, sore throat, unexplained loss of taste or smell, diarrhea and headache. COVID-19 can be severe, and some cases have caused death. The new coronavirus can be spread from person to person. It is diagnosed with a laboratory test. There is no coronavirus vaccine yet. Prevention involves frequent hand-washing, coughing into the bend of your elbow, staying home when you are sick and wearing a cloth face covering if you can't practice social distancing.
- Please self-screen at home for symptoms before entering Christ Episcopal Church facilities. Please stay home if you or someone you live with has been diagnosed with COVID-19, or if you or someone you live with has a frequent cough, fever, difficulty breathing, chills, muscle pain, sore throat, recent loss of taste or smell.
- Please seek medical attention if your symptoms become severe, including persistent pain or pressure in the chest, confusion, or bluish lips or face.
- The best way to prevent the spread of COVID-19 is to:
 - Wash your hand frequently with soap and water for 20 seconds, or use hand sanitizer when hand washing is not an option. Please wash or sanitize your hands as soon as you enter our facilities.
 - Wear a cloth face covering at all times. This is mandated by our state. Please wash your face covering after each use. Children under the age of two should not wear face coverings.
 - Avoid touching your face.
 - Maintain a distance of 6 feet from people not living in your household
- If you or someone you live with have been diagnosed with COVID-19, contact a church warden immediately so that we can contact others who may have been in contact with you.

Savile Lord (202) 423-4988

Peggy Havener (507) 320-0758

Jeff Shaft (507) 279-1897

Joy Shaft (507) 402-5461

SUPPLIES NEEDED TO MAINTAIN THIS PLAN

One-time purchases

Description	Quantity
Touchless hand sanitizer stations (sanctuary entrance and near altar)	2
Spray bottles	4
Painter's tape	2
Tape measurers	2

Continually stock

Description	Quantity
Host	N/A
Bleach	N/A
Isopropyl alcohol (70%)	N/A
Lysol Multi-Surface or additional cleaning fluid that meets EPA Guidelines	N/A
Hand sanitizer	N/A
Paper towels	N/A
Sign in sheets for each service (based on directory)	N/A

REQUIRED ROLES

Role	Appointed Person
Training of safety protocols for church staff and supply priests	
Training of safety protocols for altar guild	
Vestry point of contact for each service	
Training of safety protocols for those using the other church spaces	
Training of safety protocols for ushers	
Ordering and maintaining sanitation supplies	

COVID-19 Wellness Checklist

Staff Name _____ Date _____ Temperature _____

1. Do you or a family member presently have any signs or symptoms of COVID-19 (fever, cough, shortness of breath)?
 Yes
 No
2. Have you or a family member have any of these signs or symptoms in the last two weeks?
 Yes
 No
3. Are you or a family member presently living with someone who has experienced the signs or symptoms of COVID-19 in the last two weeks?
 Yes
 No
4. In the last two weeks have you or someone who lives with you been under quarantine for COVID-19?
 Yes
 No
5. In the last two days have you or a family members temperature exceeded 99.5 degrees?
Yes
No

If you answered yes to any of the questions above, you may not attend service today.
