

## **Worship and Programming at St. John the Evangelist during Pandemic**

The Episcopal Church of Minnesota (ECMN) has issued guidelines for churches to follow during the COVID-19 pandemic. These guidelines provide direction for our worship and programming at different stages of risk, from stay-at-home to the lifting of all restrictions. ECMN chose to use the imagery of winter to frame the guidelines, knowing that this would help us as Minnesotans understand the restrictions of each phase. More detailed information about the ECMN response is available here, [ECMN Guidelines](#).

At St. John's we are using these guidelines to inform how we can serve God and each other during this time. Below is a brief outline of the stages identified by ECMN and how they will impact our programs and worship at SJE.

We expect to remain in stages 1.5 or 2.0 for at least the next several months, and will clearly indicate which stage we are in on our website and in communications with the parish.

### **Stage 1.0 THE BLIZZARD**

- Infection is widespread
- Stay-at-home orders are in place

### **Stage 1.5 THE BLIZZARD, AFTER THE PLOWS COME THROUGH**

- Stay-at-home orders lifted
- Gatherings of 10 or fewer are permitted in the building
- Infection is still widespread

### **Stage 2.0 THE LONG WINTER**

- Sustained reduction in cases
- Adequate levels of:
  - hospital and ICU capacity
  - testing for COVID
  - contact tracing
- Authorization from the Governor to re-gather in faith communities

### **Stage 3.0 SPRING**

- Negative community spread
- Mass vaccination
- Lifting of mask and distancing requirements

## **At St. John's:**

At present, St. John's will not reopen its building for in-person worship until Stage 3, even though ECMN guidelines permit it in some circumstances.

We believe that worship at St. John's is an act of inclusivity and welcome, and until all people are able to join together, we believe to gather with only a few is to engage in an act that contradicts the hospitality and inclusivity we've come to identify with corporate worship in our faith community. What's more, at St. John's we aim to practice solidarity with and care for the vulnerable. To gather for worship in the midst of this pandemic is to put vulnerable people at risk and it is therefore at odds with our self-understanding to gather.

We are committed to providing other opportunities to worship during this time when we cannot gather together in person. We will follow the guidance of the Bishop and ECMN and as ECMN announces that we are able to enter into the next stage of reopening the St. John's task force will reconvene to consider how to best adapt the current stage to our Parish abilities, resources, and needs. If we do not proceed into the next phase of reopening for more than two months the taskforce will reconvene to assess if the current needs of the Parish are being taken care of or if the reopening plan needs to be amended in any way.

## **STAGE 1.5: Current Circumstance**

We have been offering on-line worship opportunities since March, and will continue to do so indefinitely.

Vestry has allocated funds for improvements to our sound system and lighting that will allow us to begin livestream worship from within the sanctuary. We hope to start this service with regularly scheduled streaming by mid September.

We are now also able to include a hymn or hymns sung by a soloist.

Due to the complexity of offering remote services, and as we implement new audio-visual streaming technology in our worship space, we will only be offering our primary 10:00am service at this time.

Meetings and other programming will be remote during this period.

Small groups (25 or fewer) may meet outdoors if they follow preparedness plan protocols.

Groups that would like to meet in person outdoors must submit a request and COVID-19 safety plan submitted to Sarah Dull prior to the meeting.

## **STAGE 2.0:**

We will continue to offer on-line worship services only.

Committee meetings will continue to be held remotely unless there is a specific need to meet on site.

Clergy and Staff may return to offices at St. John's where distancing is possible.

Godly Play: Regularly offered remotely but may have outdoor offerings that are adequately physically distanced if interest from families exist. Outdoor gatherings will require pre-registration, caregiver involvement, and ability to follow preparedness plan protocols.

Youth Group: Regularly offered remotely but may offer outdoor gatherings where interest exists with adequate physical distancing and preparedness plan protocols in place.

Volunteers: Will be permitted in the building only if the work must be done on site and preparedness plan protocols can be maintained.

Larger groups will continue to meet on-line.

## **STAGE 3.0:**

We have a time of thanksgiving and celebration for getting through the storm!

# St. John the Evangelist Episcopal Church COVID-19 Re-opening Preparedness Plan

[Based on MN Department of Labor & Industry \(DLI\) and the Department of Health \(MDH\) template.](#)

## Staff Protections and Protocols

**Note:** Volunteers using the building will be expected to follow the same notification, distance, and hygiene rules as staff and clergy. They should be given a written summary of these expectations when they enter the building for the first time.

### I. **Returning to the workplace:**

- A. SJE will survey staff members to see who is a member of a vulnerable population, or who lives in a household with someone who is vulnerable to COVID-19.
- B. Work schedules will be adjusted to allow for remote work when necessary.

### II. **Employee Health Screening:**

- A. Each employee will be given a copy of the health screen questionnaire and will be required to use it as a decision tool for whether they can enter the building to work on any particular day,  
<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/facilityhlthscreen.pdf>.
- B. Each employee will be given a written summary of employee and employer obligations to notify others of COVID-19 infections (see B.1. and B.2. below).
- C. The health screen questionnaire and the obligations summary will be posted at the entrance to SJE.

### III. **Notification Obligations:**

Sarah Dull is the designated contact for employees or parishioners to notify the church of illness. If Sarah is not available, then the Rector should be notified.

#### **A.1. Clergy and Staff Employee Expectations:**

Employees must contact Sarah if they, or someone in their household, has COVID-19 symptoms or tests positive.

If an employee tests positive they will not return to work for 14 days, and 3 days without fever or significant respiratory symptoms, whichever is longer.

If a staff member has been in contact with someone who has tested positive, they must quarantine at home for 14 days.

SJE will pay regular wages or salary for employees who have COVID-19 symptoms and are unable to work, a doctor's note is required.

## **A.2. St. John's Expectations:**

If an employee tests positive for the disease SJE will notify anyone who may have come in contact with that employee.

## **IV. Workplace Safety Protocols:**

**Signing in:** Employees will sign in/out when they come into the building so that we can contact trace in case of illness.

**Messaging:** SJE will provide each employee with written safety protocols and will post those protocols in public spaces in the building.

**Social Distance:** Employees must observe a 6 foot distance from one another while inside the building.

**Masks:** Employees must wear masks inside the building unless they are alone in a private office.

**Offices:** Staff in shared offices will stagger schedules so that they are only occupied by one person at a time. SJE will provide towels and sanitizer in each office. Employees will be asked to use sanitizer to wipe down communally used objects or equipment after use.

**Restrooms:** SJE will provide paper towels and sanitizer in each bathroom. Employees will be asked to use towels to open doors and to sanitize taps and handles after use.

**Elevators:** Staff should use elevators one at a time. Sanitizer will be available in the elevator to wipe keys after use.

**Staff Meetings:** Most meetings will be remote. If a small group (10 or less) does meet in person everyone should wear masks and maintain a six-foot distance.

**Food:** Employees should not share food and are responsible for cleaning and sanitizing kitchen facilities after each use.

**Water Fountain:** Either disconnect the water fountain or modify it for cup/water bottle use.

**Communal Equipment:** Employees will be responsible for cleaning handles and knobs, etc. of copiers and other communal equipment after use.

## **V. Staff hygiene:**

**Handwashing protocols:** Employees are expected to wash hands after using the bathroom and before using communal equipment such as copiers.

**SJE will provide handwashing and/or sanitizing supplies in the following areas:**

Offices

Bathrooms

Kitchens

Near shared equipment

At building entrances

**SJE will post the following signage:**

Hygiene signs in kitchens, offices, hallways or other easily visible areas.

About mask use at building entrances and will provide masks to employees and volunteers as needed.

In kitchens and bathrooms with instructions on sanitizing after use.

## **Building and Ventilation Protocols**

### **I. General Building Conditions**

- A. All systems will be inspected and brought online in accordance with existing schedules. Systems will be monitored following startup to ensure normal operating status.
- B. Prior to reopening the building will be inspected to ensure that no pest or vermin infestation has occurred. Appropriate measures to eradicate pests and vermin will be deployed if necessary, including the use of a professional pest control expert.
- C. There are 8 HVAC units and 16 air filters that will be inspected every 90 days with filters being replaced as needed.

### **II. Day-To-Day Operations**

- A. Operate HVAC systems under normal operating conditions and when possible open the front church doors to maximize fresh air flow. Doors will remain closed if outside conditions would be blowing excessive volumes of air across parishioners.
- B. Given the size of the church we do not have current plans to deploy portable HEPA filter units. We will rely on the functionality of our filters in the HVAC system.
- C. We will periodically review the systems operating schedule and adjust based on church occupancy and utilization.
- D. The church currently does not have the ability to control the relative humidity inside the church.
- E. We do not currently have the capability, nor do we feel this is relevant to the church given the size of the building. This is a capability that likely exists in 5-10% of buildings in the Twin Cities.

## **Drop-Off, Pick-Up, and Delivery Practices and Protocols**

**Note:** The Building will be closed to the public without a pre-arranged appointment.

### **I. Procedure for Deliveries:**

Email [s.cott.jungbauer@stjohnsstpaul.org](mailto:s.cott.jungbauer@stjohnsstpaul.org) and cc [h.annah.stenserson@stjohnsstpaul.org](mailto:h.annah.stenserson@stjohnsstpaul.org).

Put "Drop Off Only" in the subject line.

In the main email state:

- What you are dropping off.
- The intended recipient.
- Three days that work best for delivery.

The Building manager will respond within 24 hours with the day and time for delivery.

No drop-offs before 10 and after 4.

Deliveries to be loaded by the person dropping off. There will be a cart provided.

Deliveries will be stored on the premises and the recipient will be notified upon its arrival.

## II. Recipients of Deliveries:

Upon arrival notification respond with desired time to pick up your delivery.

At agreed time come to the gymnasium.

Use provided sanitizer and gloves to open the package and disinfect contents, as necessary.

Leave the empty box/packaging in the gym for disposal by the building manager.

## III. Leaving a Package for Pick-Up:

Email recipient of the package and cc [scott.jungbauer@stjohnsstpaul.org](mailto:scott.jungbauer@stjohnsstpaul.org).

Put in the Subject line "Pick up only".

Let the recipient know they need to contact [scott.jungbauer@stjohnsstpaul.org](mailto:scott.jungbauer@stjohnsstpaul.org) and cc [hannah.stenserson@stjohnsstpaul.org](mailto:hannah.stenserson@stjohnsstpaul.org) to schedule pick-up.

Have them state in the main email three days that work best for pick up.

The Building manager will respond within 24 hours the time that works best for his schedule.

No drop-offs before 10 and after 4.

Pick up will be loaded into the vehicle by the Building Manager.

## Work and Gathering Space Cleaning and Disinfection Protocols

### I. Sanitation schedule and checklist:

- A daily checklist is being created. As each area gets wiped down/disinfected the sexton will mark the area, initial and date each shift. This sheet will be turned in at the end of their shift.
- Areas to be cleaned: doorknobs, panic bars, railings, tables, walls, doors, glass, light switches, outlet covers, trash can lid and exterior, or any possible used surface or area I failed to mention.
- Cleaning will be done with a pinequat solution that can be sprayed on all surfaces with a fine mist.

- Painted surfaces, natural surfaces will be sprayed and will be given a 15-30 second count before being wiped with a dry towel. Processed surfaces and metal surfaces can be sprayed and left. Glass surfaces will be wiped down with quat then cleaned with glass cleaner.
- Sanitation with this product will be used twice daily. Frequency will increase if needed or possibility of contamination in an area.

**II. Policy for sanitizing electronic devices that cannot be sanitized using liquid:**

- A sanitizing alcohol-based spray from our distributor will be used.
- In the unlikely event this spray cannot be used we will use UV lighting.

**III. Protocols for disinfecting shared personal equipment:**

Phones, Computers, Copier etc. Use your own as much as possible. If not, you are responsible for sanitizing that area and items/electronics used following the procedure below:

- On the mist settings use the pine quat on desks, chair arms, phones, light switches. Mist and wait 15 seconds before wiping and throwing the towels out.
- Use a quat misted paper towel on computer screens.
- Place the trash bin outside the office door. The sexton will empty and sanitize the bin.
- Use disinfectant spray sparingly on keyboards and mouse.

**IV. Immediate cleaning/disinfecting following notice of occupant with COVID-19**

- The building will be immediately closed to all for at least 48 hours.
- The building team will then have another 48 hours to clean and disinfect before others can return to the building.
- The Rector will decide if the building needs to be shut down longer.

**Communications and Training Practices and Protocols**

- The Executive Administrator will review this plan with leadership at the next vestry meeting. When the plan is approved it will be distributed to all members of staff and ministry leaders.
- The Executive Administrator will hold a Zoom meeting to discuss the plan with all staff and ministry leaders.
- This preparedness plan will be posted in easily accessible locations around the building.
- The Executive Administrator will distribute this plan to outside groups and to the parish at large.

- There will be regular reminders to follow the precautions laid out in this plan. Any persistent infringements will be addressed by the Rector and wardens, and could result in the offender not being allowed in the building until the risks of this pandemic have passed.

### **What Organizations and Facilities can do to Minimize Possible Transmission**

- All who access the building will be required to complete a screening survey upon entering the building. And will be required to sign in and out for contact tracing.
- SJE will discourage anyone from being in the building who may be at higher risk for severe illness according to the CDC - people 65 years and older, or with lung disease, asthma, heart conditions, diabetes, kidney disease, liver disease, who are immunocompromised or obese are at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19 (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-at-higher-risk.html>).
- Signage will be placed in public areas.
- All who access the building will be asked to wash hands after using the bathroom and before touching communal surfaces.
- All occupants of SJE are required to wear a mask while in the building.
- Communion will not be offered inside the building until the pandemic has passed.

### **Other Important Considerations**

- St. John's will continue to offer virtual services and other outreach to all community members. We encourage parishioners to continue to use these virtual offerings as much as possible.

### **Occupancy Limits**

- During the remainder of the pandemic St. John's will not gather inside the building for either worship or programming. No one will be allowed to gather in excess of 10 individuals at a time in the building.
- Staff, volunteers, and outside contractors using the building for work will communicate well in advance to the rector and Building Manager, allowing them to coordinate which entrances and areas of the building to be in and use so as to minimize individuals being in the same space for extended periods or to allow for needed cleaning and periodic sanitization.