



## A Regathering Plan for Trinity Episcopal Church Hartford, CT<sup>1</sup>

This regathering plan is based on guidelines and parameters established by various Episcopal Dioceses and describes four phases that Trinity Episcopal Church will follow for the duration of the COVID-19 Pandemic. We commit to diligently following each phase as described in this document with openness to amend the plan as understandings of the virus continue to develop.

The Key Characteristics described for each phase do not have to all be met in order for us to move or remain in that phase. These characteristics are meant to be a general guide to gauge the level of impact of COVID-19 on the community and are not a checklist.

Each member/worshipper will be required to sign the ‘Covenant for Regathering in Worship’. A copy of the Covenant will be sent to each member/worshipper via email with an explanation and request for the recipient to sign and date the document. The parish office will ensure that there are copies available to be mailed out. The Rector will be responsible for filing the signed Covenants.

### **PHASE 1: Stay at Home**

Key Characteristics of this phase include: COVID-19 cases are rising, at peak, or plateaued; capacity of the medical care system is under severe stress; testing and tracing is not widespread; state of emergency or stay-at-home order is in place or only essential businesses and institutions open. 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, County, or State authorities.

### **Trinity’s Protocols under Phase 1**

- **Worship**
  - There will be no public worship. All worship will be live-streamed in accordance with all social distance and safety guidelines with a maximum of 7 people present.
  - Online coffee hour will be offered after the 10am worship service.
  
- **Pastoral Care**
  - Pastoral Care is done via telephone or online, with the exception of graveside funerals which can be held following limitations as set forth by civic authorities and maintaining of social distance and masking requirements.

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<sup>1</sup>Primarily based on Regathering Plan for St. Anne’s in the Episcopal Diocese of Washington [https://www.edow.org/files/7915/9165/3721/StAnnesReopenPlan\\_1.pdf](https://www.edow.org/files/7915/9165/3721/StAnnesReopenPlan_1.pdf) and DioMass “A Journey by Stages” [https://www.diomass.org/sites/diomass/files/documents/A%20JOURNEY%20BY%20STAGES%202020\\_05\\_18.pdf](https://www.diomass.org/sites/diomass/files/documents/A%20JOURNEY%20BY%20STAGES%202020_05_18.pdf)

- **Staff**
  - All staff will work from home unless their presence in the building is required in order to fulfill their duties. Any staff presence in the building should be as short as possible.
  - No volunteers will be in the office.
- **Building Use**
  - The building will remain closed with the exception of authorized entry to conduct businesses necessary to the continued operation of Trinity.
  - All other activities, such social gatherings, meetings and any other activities all take place via telephone or through online meetings.

## **PHASE 2: Cautious**

Key Characteristics of this phase include: at least 14-day consecutive declines in positive tests for coronavirus; COVID-19 hospitalizations, ICU bed use, and deaths show ongoing decline; capacity of the medical system is no longer under significant stress; testing and contact tracing available; sufficient supplies of personal protective equipment are available; significant limitations on size and type of gatherings continue under directives of government and public health authorities; some businesses and institutions may reopen with limitations.

### **Trinity's Protocols under Phase 2**

- **Worship**
  - The 8 am Service will be open for in person worship.
  - When conditions allow, the service will be in the Memorial Garden with a maximum attendance of 40 people.
    - If the service is held in the Nave all windows are to be opened in order to allow for ventilation and the maximum attendance will be 60.
  - Regardless of location, all in attendance will be required to wear masks that can only be removed for leading parts of the service.
  - There will be no distribution of Communion.
  - There will be no congregational singing. Cantors or choristers permitted provided they maintain significant distance (20ft or more) from one another and the congregation while singing.
  - The 10am service will remain live streamed under the guidelines of Phase 1.
  - See Trinity 'In Person Worship Instructions' for additional details.
- **Pastoral Care**
  - Weddings and funerals may be held, observing directives about the size of gatherings and safety protocols.
  - Baptism is to be administered in emergency situations only. The Thanksgiving for the Birth or Adoption of a child may be used if safety protocols are observed.
  - Pastoral care to those, or by those, in higher-risk categories for contracting the virus is via phone or online contact.

- **Staff**
  - The office will generally be staffed M-Th from 9am-3pm but is open only by appointment.
  - Flexibility for staff to work from home in consultation with the Rector.
  - If a staff member has been exposed to COVID-19 or is ill and concerned that they may be infected, they are to alert the Rector and get tested as soon as possible. They should work from home until a negative test result is received.
  - If any staff member tests positive for COVID-19 the office will close for 14 days.
  
- **Building Use**
  - The office will be open by appointment only.
  - All people over the age of five must wear masks covering the mouth and nose while in public spaces of the building and when in the presence of others. (For children between two and five, the wearing of a mask is at the discretion of the child's guardian.) When alone in individual offices, masks may be removed.
  - All people entering the building must sign in with current contact information in order to facilitate contact tracing should it become necessary.
  - Signage will be maintained regarding Covid-19 symptoms, hygiene etc.
  - Use of hand sanitizer is required and will be provided by the church at any entrance point.
  - Trinity Academy open for in-person classes in consultation with leadership of Trinity Church.
  - In consultation with Trinity leadership, small groups that can only function in person may gather in order to facilitate ministries of Trinity (i.e. Preparing lunches for Worship in the Park, Choir school rehearsals) as long as social distancing and cleaning guidelines are followed.
  - No recovery groups allowed to meet in person.

### **PHASE 3: Vigilant**

Key Characteristics for Phase 3 include: COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations, and deaths indicate near-zero community transmission of the virus; testing and contact tracing is widespread; health care systems are well-equipped; limitations on size and type of gatherings may remain but with fewer requirements; many businesses and institutions may reopen with some limitations.

### **Trinity's Protocols Under Phase 3**

- **Worship**
  - Both 8am and 10am worship services will be held in person with all of the protocols from Phase 2 in place.
  - The 10am service will continue to be live-streamed and technology will be put into place to allow readers and intercessors to participate from home.
  - Communion in one kind (bread only) *may* resume at the discretion of the Rector.

- **Pastoral Care**
  - In person pastoral care visits resume, provided hospital and care facility protocols are observed and strict hygiene protocols are maintained, and subject to consideration of any risk factors affecting the congregant or the visitor.
  - Weddings and funerals may be held, observing directives about the size of gatherings and safety protocols.
  - Baptism may be administered, provided sanitation and hygiene requirements are followed, with the use of a mask by the baptismal minister.
  
- **Staff**
  - Same as Phase 2
  - In consultation with the Rector and the Assistant to the Rector, some office volunteers may be allowed back into the office for specific tasks.
  
- **Building Use**
  - The office will be open by appointment only.
  - All people over the age of five must wear masks covering the mouth and nose while in public spaces of the building and when in the presence of others. (For children between two and five, the wearing of a mask is at the discretion of the child's guardian.) When alone in individual offices, masks may be removed.
  - All people entering the building must sign in with current contact information in order to facilitate contact tracing should it become necessary.
  - Signage will be maintained regarding Covid-19 symptoms, hygiene etc.
  - Use of hand sanitizer is required and will be provided by the church at any entrance point.
  - Trinity Academy open for in-person classes in consultation with leadership of Trinity Church.
  - In consultation with Trinity leadership, small groups affiliated with Trinity may gather in person as long as social distancing and sanitation guidelines are followed. Online meetings are still encouraged in order to facilitate participation by those who are not comfortable attending an in person meeting.
  - At the discretion of the leadership of Trinity, in person recovery groups may resume with an approved hygiene and sanitation plan in place.

#### **PHASE 4: New Normal**

Key characteristics for Phase 4 include: most limits on gatherings are lifted and physical restrictions eased; testing is widespread for virus and immunity; a vaccine is developed and is widely available to the public and/or treatment with proven effectiveness is standard.

## Trinity's Protocols under Phase 4

- **Worship**
  - No limits imposed on the number of worshippers, though those at greater risk should always take extra precautions.
  - Mask wearing is optional.
  - Congregational singing resumes.
  - Physical exchange of the peace with fist bump, elbow bump
  - Communion in both kinds resumes with best available wisdom about health and safety in place.
  - Coffee hour resumes without restrictions.
  - Worship continued to be live streamed.
  
- **Pastoral Care**
  - Pastoral care visits resume, employing learnings from the pandemic.
  - No restrictions on weddings, funerals, or baptisms.
  
- **Staff**
  - The office will be open M-Th from 9am-3pm.
  - In consultation with the rector, there will be continued flexibility for staff to work from home.
  - Volunteers welcomed back into the office.
  
- **Building Use**
  - All groups are allowed to use the building following best available guidance from public health officials about safety. It is strongly encouraged to continue to provide for online access to all meetings.
  - Sanitation practices previously established will continue.

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 , County, or State 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 guides are subject to revision as new information becomes available and/or at the direction of diocesan or civic authorities.