

St. Philip's Episcopal Church, Uvalde
Plan for Resuming In-Person Worship During COVID-19 Phase 2
May 18, 2020

Introduction

In order to comply with the directives issued by the Episcopal Diocese of West Texas for phased reopening of churches, St. Philip's Episcopal Church of Uvalde has compiled the following guidelines for our parish. We will communicate with all congregants by providing digital and/or printed protocols two weeks prior to beginning of Phase 2 reopening. These materials will also be available in the church office and made available to attendees at the beginning of worship services. Signs will be posted to remind all who enter St. Philip's of reopening protocols and hygiene.

These guidelines have been based upon instruction from Bishop David Reed and the leadership of the Episcopal Diocese of West Texas. They have been prayerfully discussed and prepared by the vestry. They come from a place of love, responsibility, and a desire to be good shepherds of our parishioners and their health and well-being. As we proceed, please be advised that should circumstances worsen, either the diocese or local church can make changes in procedures.

1. Phase 1 – Adherence to the moratorium on public worship, in-person meetings, Sunday School and other formation classes, events and gatherings, and the closure of church and Diocesan offices, as indicated by the Diocese.
2. Phase 2 – After Phase 1 is lifted, based on certain health characteristics (downward trajectory of Covid-19 cases, within a 14 day period, adequate testing for all people exhibiting Covid-19 symptoms and monitoring of virus cases and contact tracing, and adequate hospital availability), we will work to adjust our facilities, workspace, worship space, and worship services to comply with the requirements set forth by the Diocese. We will continue online worship and begin modified in-person worship with proactive health and safety protocols in place.
3. Phase 3 – Full return to in-person worship services, meetings, formation classes, community ministries and gatherings will not occur until the Diocese has determined that it is time to lift all restrictions. This determination will be based on specific health characteristics indicating negative community spread and the availability of mass vaccinations and testing. Even during Phase 3, St. Philips will continue to offer online worship and meetings.

Protocols for Protecting Congregants and Visitors

The following guidelines apply to all worship services which occur on any day of the week, whether including the Eucharist or not. Directives are grounded in love and concern for all who attend worship services and are intended for their health and well-being. Ushers will be available

to assist attendees to be seated in a manner that will provide proper distance between individuals and households.

1. Anyone exhibiting any symptoms that are indicative of any virus or infection is asked to stay home and join us at our Facebook page, where we will be streaming our services. It is also strongly recommended that older adults and those in at-risk populations participate online. You can also access a live-stream of the service on our [Facebook page](#) or through our website at www.stphilipsuvalde.org.
2. Out of love and consideration for other attendees, everyone over 10 years of age to wear a mask or other face covering. Masks will be available at the church for those who do not have one.
3. Out of love and consideration for other attendees and to limit spread of the virus, please refrain from our normal customs of physically sharing the peace, shaking hands, hugging, fist bumping, high fiving, or gathering or lingering in groups before or after church.
4. At this time, the offering plate will not be passed among congregants, but will be placed at the entrance to the church for your gifts and tithes. Please consider alternate ways of continuing your gifts to St. Philip's: mailing through the postal service, automatic draft through your bank, using the "donate" option on our Facebook page or webpage.
5. Ushers will assist attendees in finding places that are marked for proper social distancing. As this will take time, please plan to arrive early enough to be seated before the service begins.
6. Until further notice from the Diocese, communion will be distributed in one kind only, using only wafers.
 - A. Clergy and all assistants will wash hands for 20 seconds prior to the service, in addition to using hand sanitizer prior to distribution of the elements.
 - B. Altar guilds should follow all sanitary protocols for vessels and items used during services.
 - C. Although the priest is not required to wear a mask during the Eucharistic Prayer, it should be assured that the elements are covered during consecration and that only the priest's host is touched.
 - D. Clergy and Eucharistic Ministers are required to wear a face mask during distribution covering nose, mouth and chin.
 - E. Hand to hand contact is to be avoided during distribution of the communion wafer to reduce the risk of contamination from communicant to priest and then on to everyone else.

- F. Communicants will receive the wafer while standing instead of kneeling at the altar. Clergy will remind attendees to remain standing during communion.
 - G. Communion ushers will help recipients maintain six feet of distance between households.
 - H. The theology of Spiritual Communion will be explained prior to the Eucharistic Prayer, so that those who do not feel comfortable in coming forward may remain in their pews. At the end of communion, a blessing will be offered from the altar area for those who remained in their seats and those participating from home.
7. Sunday School Classes and other formation classes will not meet until a later date.
8. Nursery services will not be available until sometime in the future. Neither will the children's activity packets normally found at the back of the sanctuary be supplied. You may want to bring a notebook and pencil for your child if you feel it is needed. Playground equipment is not available until a later date.

Protocols for Employees and Volunteers

Health Requirements

1. First and foremost, no employee or volunteer who is exhibiting any symptoms common to Covid-19 is to come to work or to serve. Employees and volunteers will be screened for signs of illness upon arriving. (Symptoms include cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, loss of taste or smell, diarrhea, feeling feverish or a measured temperature greater than or equal to 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit, or known close contact with a person who is lab-confirmed to have Covid-19.)
2. Employees or volunteers who have been diagnosed with Covid-19 or exhibited similar symptoms must meet the following criteria before returning to work or serve.
 - A. No fever for at least 3 days, without the use of fever reducing medications.
 - B. Improved respiratory health.
 - C. At least 7 days since initial symptoms.
 - C. Any employee or volunteer who has had close contact with a person who has been lab-confirmed to have Covid-19 must not return to work or serve until the end of the 14-day self-quarantine period, from the last day of exposure.
 - D. Those in the at -risk population should not volunteer at this time.

Training

Employees and volunteers will be provided with training, which will include information on the following:

1. Appropriate cleaning and disinfecting, hand hygiene, and respiratory etiquette.
2. CDC recommendations for cleaning and disinfecting our facilities <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html>.
3. New protocol for eliminating handshakes, hugs, etc.
4. Proper use of face masks in the facility.
5. Maintaining 6 feet social distance.
6. Setting the example for proper protocol during the pandemic.

Protocols for Training of Employees and Volunteers

The following guidelines apply to all employees and volunteers at St. Philip's Episcopal Church, Uvalde.

1. Familiarize yourself with the guidelines for protocols for attendees, employees, trainees, and volunteers.
2. Upon entering the facilities, all are required to sanitize hands, either using hand sanitizer or washing hands with soap for 20 seconds.
3. Face masks or coverings that cover nose and mouth are required.
4. Maintain 6 feet of separation between yourself and other people.
5. Avoid contact of other people through handshaking, embracing, etc.
6. Set an example of social distancing, wearing of facial coverings, avoiding physical contact for members and attendees.
7. Ushers should prop doors open in order to limit touching of surfaces by attendees.
8. Proper cleaning of facilities prior to and after services, should include sanitizing all surfaces and objects touched, such as doorknobs, altar rails, pews, kneelers, contact areas in restrooms and any objects used during worship such as the Book of Common Prayer, Hymnals, or Bibles.

9. Any printed material is strictly one-time use only and is to be discarded at the end of the service.

Protocols for Facilities

To limit the spread of Covid-19 Virus, until further notice, only the office area, portions of the hallway, main restrooms and sanctuary will be open to the public. Classrooms, nursery, kitchen, Grace Hall, Briscoe Hall, and the playground will be closed for the time being, and the entrance going into those areas will remain locked or cordoned off. No meals, food, or drinks of any kind should be provided. Signs will be made visible explaining best hygiene practices.

1. Normal Weekday Usage – Only the office and restroom areas will be open during the week, except for access to Sacristy prior to Eucharistic Services.
 - A. Clean and disinfect any regularly touched surfaces frequently during business hours and at the end or beginning of the day. (doorknobs, tables, chairs, surfaces, keyboards, computer screens and other office equipment, and restroom facilities)
 - B. Hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes, soap and water, or similar disinfectants will be readily available.
2. Worship Services – There will be only 3 entrances into the building available during our phased reopening: Mesquite Street/office entrance; Getty Street main sanctuary entrance; school/restroom entrance.
 - A. The number of worship services be kept to a minimum in order to limit the number of volunteers needed to be trained for cleaning and to serve as ushers and worship leaders, and also to limit the spread of the virus.
 - B. Clean and disinfect any regularly touched surfaces prior to all worship services (doorknobs, pews, kneelers, any objects used during the service).
 - C. Hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes, soap and water, or similar disinfectants will be readily available.
 - D. Ushers will prop doors open prior to and following services to minimize touching of surfaces.
 - E. An usher will remain at the door to assist anyone who enters or exits during a service.
 - F. Locked doors and unused entrances will be marked to eliminate guess work for attendees.
3. Playground Equipment will not be available for access at this time.