

St. Mark's Episcopal
Church COVID-19
Pandemic
Plan
For Worship Services

1.0 OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this document is to describe a re-gathering and operational plan for church services during the current and evolving COVID-19 pandemic. This Plan is consistent with the Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Florida ("Diocese") and the CDC "Interim Guidance for Communities of Faith" and provides details specific for St. Mark's Episcopal Church.

This Plan recognizes the evolving nature of the risks associated with this pandemic and will be regularly reviewed and updated accordingly.

2.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Specific tasks presented in this procedure will be performed by volunteers from existing ministry groups (e.g., ushers, Vestry, and Altar Guild).

- **Clergy/Vestry:**

- Assure the appropriate conformance of church operations to established canons and guidelines of the Diocese and to the applicable executive orders of the State of Florida.
- Create a short questionnaire/verification that will be required of any person attending worship service. Required information: Wellness confirmation, confirmation of the lack of any direct contact in the past 2 weeks with a COVID-19 positive individual, contact information, awareness of current St. Mark's service changes. This will be on the sign-up page and on the sign-in sheet.

- **Church Office:**

- Create and manage a worship service pre-registration system. This can be an on-line or paper based (e.g., spreadsheet) device that allows parishioners (or visitors) to sign up for worship services in advance.
- Receive calls from parishioners (or visitors) and record contact information into the system. Required information: Family Unit or Individual Name, Number and age attending, worship service date, phone number, email address, completion of COVID-19 wellness questionnaire, and any changes from date of questionnaire.
- Registrants should indicate if use of the accessibility ramp is needed and if assistance is needed getting from the car to the handicapped entrance
- Remind the registrants to contact them if they cannot make their worship time.
- Provide the registrant list to the Usher team at least 30 minutes prior to worship service time.

- **Ushers: Six per worship service**

- One usher will help guide people to the entrance and help them maintain social distance.
- One usher will possess the pre-registration list provided by the schedulers and check-in individuals using the registration check list and remind them to use the hand sanitizer.
- Four ushers will serve as seating ushers. Ushers will guide the Family Unit or individual to seating. The seating ushers will have copies of the seating chart, will be aware of available seating and will track who sits where by name. The seating ushers will mark occupied seats as people are seated.
- All ushers will remain vigilant after the service begins to assist any late comers and to make sure social distancing is maintained between attendees and masks are kept on at all times.
- Seating ushers must also be available to assist individuals who may need to use the accessibility ramp.
- Ushers should arrive at least 30 minutes prior to service time.

- **Sexton/Set Up:**

- Apply directional arrows to encourage clear understanding of the requested directional flow from the entrance to the worship space and from communion to the exit.
- Apply "8-foot social distance" reminders on sidewalk and floor at entrance. Apply 6-foot social distance markers on the aisles of the sanctuary and at the communion station.
- Prepare the worship service space based on the registration checklist provided by the schedulers. This includes confirmation of signage and locked doors and caution tape on pews and any others areas as needed.
- Clean and disinfect identified church areas (rest rooms, likely contact surfaces) per established procedure between each worship service.

3.0 PREREQUISITE CONSIDERATIONS

The following considerations are established to provide a framework:

- In order to support limitations for gathering size, a pre-registration for worship services will be established. This limitation has currently been set at 50, which is the number we can have in the sanctuary while maintaining social distancing, taking into account clergy and ushers. Any person wishing to attend that cannot due to space limitations will be asked to register for the next available service. Attendees will be reminded to contact the church and stay home if not feeling well (for any reason). Registration process will allow for contact tracing if need be.
- The church worship space and restrooms will be sanitized after services.
- Coffee Hour is suspended and refreshments will not be provided.
- Gray Hall will not be used and will be considered "no access" and not be entered.
- The sanctuary restrooms will be available for use.
- Non-surgical masks will be required throughout the time preceding, during and following worship. Masks will be made available for those who do not have one.
- A check-in will be required on entry that will be matched to the pre-registration list.
- Touchless hand sanitizers will be provided at entrances and exits.
- Attendees will be ushered to their seats prior to service. Ushers will direct family units and individuals when it is time to leave the sanctuary by pointing to and indicating the exit route.
- Attendees will enter through the main Riviera Street entrance and exit through the Narthex and the Riviera Street entrance by the choir loft, as directed by the ushers.
- Social distancing of family units and individuals will be maintained throughout the time preceding and following worship.
- The "Passing of the Peace" will be performed without human touch.
- Worship bulletins will be provided for each attendee at individual seats.
- The collection plate will not be passed. Collection plates will be placed in central locations - this includes the Narthex and near the altar rail. Offerings may be placed in the Narthex collection plate upon entry or when exiting and in the altar collection plate before receiving communion.
- Eucharistic Communion will be available in bread only.
- Piano and organ music may occur, but there will be no congregational singing.
- Any commonly hand-held items typically found in the church area (prayer books, hymnals) will be placed in unoccupied pews prior to the service.
- Appropriate reminder signage will be posted.
- This Plan will be communicated to those responsible for performing specific tasks who will be trained accordingly.

4.0 PREPARATION FOR CHURCH WORSHIP

4.1 Pre-registration. Due to the gathering size limitations a pre-registration will be required:

- The church office will maintain the registrants and determine when a worship service is full.
- The registrant list will contain the family name, number of attendees, telephone and email contact information.
- The office will remind the registrants to contact them if they cannot make their worship time.
- The office will provide the registrant list to the head usher at least 30 minutes prior to worship service time.
- If registration is full, the registrant will be placed on the list for the next scheduled service, if desired.
- There will be no walk-ins.
- Registration will begin at 9 a.m. Tuesday and close at 5 p.m. Thursday before the Sunday service.

4.2 Post Reminder Signs, Floor Direction Arrows and Set Up

The Sexton will confirm that signs are posted and the floor directional arrows are in place. He will also confirm that the service bulletins are placed in available seats, masks are available, a folding table is set up for ushers, and hand sanitizing stations in place. The table and masks will be placed in the narthex for the ushers to take outside the entrance.

4.3 Altar Guild Consideration

The Altar Guild will still prepare the worship space per the liturgical calendar with the following modifications:

Don gloves and face masks and sanitize all objects prior to placing on Altar.

Not more than 2 Altar Guild staff will work at the same time.

5.0 CHURCH WORSHIP

Worship Liturgy will proceed with the following considerations:

- Two ushers will position themselves outside the main Riviera Street Entrance. (A sign posted on all other doors will direct people to the main Riviera Street Entrance.) The doors will be propped open, if possible, to avoid people and ushers having to touch surfaces.
 - One usher will help maintain social distancing while people are checked in.
 - One usher will maintain the registration check list and mark and check in persons on arrival and direct them to use the hand sanitizer inside.
 - Four seating ushers will escort family units to seating. The required social distance is 6 feet 360°. Ushers will point out the location of the service bulletin on the seat.
 - Seating ushers will also be available to escort anyone who needs to enter through use of the handicapped accessibility ramp.
- The worship bulletin will be placed on available seats.
- The attendees will remain in their seats with face masks on and maintain social distance. The "Passing of the Peace" is still encouraged, but only with non-touch gestures and without moving from their immediate seating area.
- The celebrant will serve communion directly to attendees with attendees remaining in pews.
- Piano and organ music may be provided and an anthem individually sung. However, congregational singing will not be done.
- Collections will be placed by each attendee into the collection plates provided. The head usher will take the plate at the end of the service, place the money from the plates in the bank bag and deposit the bag in the safe.
- An usher will unlock the Riviera Street door by the choir loft just before the dismissal and will prop the door open so attendees may exit.
- Attendees will exit by the two Riviera Street doors as directed by the ushers.
- At the end of the service, attendees will exit the sanctuary as directed by the ushers assigned to each section.

6.0 AFTER WORSHIP CONSIDERATIONS

The following should be performed after worship and before leaving the church:

- The head usher signs and dates the sign-in list, reviews for clarity, and provides the list to the office by placing it in the collection plate. This list will provide the attendee count that is typically performed by the ushers (eliminating the need for the clicker counter) and allow for contact tracing if need be.

Any worship service attendee is strongly encouraged to contact the church office if they test positive or present symptoms, or have been in close contact (e.g., family members) with someone who has tested positive or has presented symptoms of COVID-19 within two weeks of attending a service.

The follow up to this information will be considered a Pastoral Care issue and be directed by the church rector who will determine in conjunction with the Vestry the appropriate contact tracing and worship attendee notification.