

St Peter's Episcopal Church, Rosedale, New York

Phased Regathering Amid COVID-19

July, 2020

Revised October, 2020



In accordance with the Diocese of Long Island, The State of New York, the City of New York and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), this document outlines parameters for the safe operations and gathering of our church community in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Guidelines for Returning to In-Person Public Worship and Gatherings
in the Diocese of Long Island.**

The reopening of our churches and the resumption of the public celebration of the sacraments will be a gradual process marked in phases. These phases apply to ALL in-person gatherings in ALL our buildings:

The Episcopal Diocese of Long Island Re-Opening Phases

Phase A – March 13, 2020-June 30, 2020: All in-person gatherings are suspended.

Phase B – July 1, 2020- October 3, 2020: Churches open for non-Eucharistic public worship and meetings. Baptisms and weddings are permitted (Appendix B) observing phase B guidelines. The number of people allowed to gather at one time shall be determined by the clergy-in-charge in consultation with their vestry and wardens. The maximum number allowed shall not exceed state and local regulations regarding Houses of Worship.

Phase C – October 4, 2020- (to be determined): Celebration of the Eucharist following the protocols set forth from the Bishop. Celebration of Baptisms, Marriages and Funerals. (See Appendix A.)

Phase D -- Resumption of full parish schedules and sacramental activities.

St. Peter's Episcopal Church Phases:

PROTOCOLS UNDER PHASE I

- The building will remain closed except for the times when the Parish Administrator, Treasurer and Counting Team will be present to conduct essential business operations. The Rector must be notified 24 hours in advance if any person wishes to conduct business or enter the church. No other persons are to enter the building at this time.
- All worship will be conducted via Zoom.
- All other activities, including meetings, book groups, Bible studies, and prayer services will take place online.
- Pastoral care will be done via telephone or online, with the exception of graveside funerals following limitations set forth by civic authorities.
- Physical distancing and the use of masks are required, absolutely no exceptions.
- Wellness checks will be done by Vestry members.

PROTOCOLS UNDER PHASE II

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 the Diocese of Long Island, New York State or New York City authorities. There are still many unanswered questions that may affect the protocols outlined in our regathering plan. These guidelines are subject to revision as new information becomes available and/or at the direction of Diocesan or civic authorities.

Starting August 2, 2020

- An in-person service will be held on the lawn at 9:00 AM on Sunday mornings and consist of Liturgy of the Word with Sermon. This service will be held on the lawn through Mid-September and moved to inside the church building after that.
- There will be no more than 50 people in attendance on the lawn at one time.
- There will be no more than 45 people in attendance in the entire building at one time.
- Be sure to register for your seat online or call the office to reserve your spot. A link to register for the following Sunday's worship service will be emailed Wednesday morning at 10:00 AM and closes by Thursday at 3:00 PM. Also, you may call the office to reserve your space during that same time frame. Phone reservation must be made between Wednesday at 10:00 AM and Thursday at 2:00 PM.
- Please do not leave any voicemails for reservations.

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- If you arrive at church on Sunday without pre-arranging your seat, you will only be allowed in if we have not reached our capacity of 50 people by 8:55 AM. Latecomers may lose their reservations. Staff (including clergy) or Vestry members will not take reservations on Monday, Tuesday, Friday, Saturday or Sunday.
 - Online Worship will still be available, including live streaming of in-person worship on Zoom and YouTube.
 - Anyone who feels sick or shows symptoms such as coughing, chills, fever, loss of taste or smell, muscle aches, or shortness of breath should stay home.
 - When you arrive on Sunday, you will be asked 3 simple questions regarding your health and your temperature will be taken, using a contactless thermometer. The information taken will be kept confidential in compliance with HIPPA regulations. This information will be kept for two (2) years.
 - Following CDC guidelines, worshippers who have pre-existing medical conditions and/or 65 years or older are strongly **encouraged** to stay home and participate in worship online.
 - Bulletins will be placed on seats. Please do not leave your copy on church premises.
 - Ushers will guide worshippers to assigned seating.
 - Please sit only at assigned areas so as to not compromise physical distancing. Families who reside together may sit together.
 - Air conditioning and fans **will not** be used during worship.
 - Face masks **must** cover your nose and mouth and **are required** to be worn at all times. If you do not have your own mask, one will be provided for you. Physical distancing of at least 6ft. must be maintained.
 - We will covenant to wear face masks and maintain physical distance to ensure each others' safety and wellbeing. (See Covenant.)

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- Hand sanitizer stations will be at all doors/entrances. The frequent use of hand sanitizer, hand washing with soap and water, is required by everyone entering the lawn/building.
 - There will be no congregational singing during any service.
 - There will be no touching of others except within family units. No exchange of the peace, no handshaking, no hugging.
 - There will be no fellowship hour after service. There will be no live coffee hour, potluck meals or after-church social gatherings.
 - Restrooms will be single use only. Please follow instructions on signage.
 - The offering receptacles will be placed at designated locations. Prior to the service or at the appointed time, worshippers will be invited to place their offering in the receptacle. Online giving through Givelify, mail or drop off at the Rectory will continue.
 - Please use the small gates (by the church and the Rectory) to enter services on the lawn. You will exit ONLY through the center gate.
 - Please use the main doors of the church (138th Avenue) to enter. Please use the 244th Street doors to exit. Ushers will direct traffic and escort those with mobility issues to an alternative entrance and exit.
 - After each service, all used areas of the church will be sanitized and documented.
 - Weddings and Baptisms will be permitted at the Bishop's and Rector's discretion.

If you test positive for COVID-19 and have been present at worship, please tell the Rector immediately so proper cleaning and notification measures can be taken.

Starting October 4, 2020

Protocols previously stated under Phase II continue to be in effect.

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- An in-person service will be held in the church building at 9:00 AM on Sunday mornings and consist of the Celebration of The Holy Eucharist.
 - The only entrance will be the main entrance to the church (138th Avenue).
 - The designated exit will be the exit near the lawn (244th Street). Any exit may be used in an emergency.
 - There will be no more than 45 people in attendance in the entire building at any time.
 - The Parish Hall will be set up for worship space, with physically distanced chairs and video screen(s).
 - Prayer Books and Hymnals are not present.
 - Signage on the pews and chairs designates physically distanced seating for individuals.
 - There are designated areas for family members to sit together; these areas are physically distanced from others.
 - Signage on the walls and doors designates Entrances and Exits.
 - Signage on the floor throughout the church designates direction of movement around the church.
 - Signage on the floor throughout the church and parish hall facilitates physical distancing.
 - Common lecterns and microphones are sanitized immediately after each use.

Protocols for Reduced-Risk Celebration of Holy Eucharist

The following form is not a normal practice for our diocese, but it suggests the best way to proceed with minimal contact. Only the presider may handle the Eucharistic elements and distribute communion. We advise that Communion in one kind is justified by the rubrics of the Book of Common Prayer for Communion of the Sick (p. 457). (from Guidelines for Returning to In-Person Public Worship and Gatherings in the Diocese of Long Island, Appendix A)

Preparation

- The Altar is to be prepared by one person before the liturgy begins. The preparer must wear a mask and gloves.
- The exact number of hosts are placed in the ciborium.

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- If a priest's host is used, the celebrant must consume it in its entirety.
 - Communion in one kind is to be offered, therefore only a small amount of wine for the celebrant should be in the cruet.

Distribution

- The celebrant takes the hosts to the entrance of the chancel.
- At the direction of the ushers, and with physical distancing, people leave their rows and go to the back of the church via the side aisles.
- Each person sanitizes their hands before approaching the celebrant via the center aisle.
- The priest places the host in the person's hand, and he/she steps aside, and, facing the altar, lowers the mask and consumes the host. After the mask is replaced, he/she then returns to his/her seat via a side aisle.
- When all have received, the celebrant returns to the altar and consumes any remaining hosts. The vessels are returned to the credence table and veiled.

Following the service, the vessels and linen are cleaned in the usual manner.

PROTOCOLS UNDER PHASE III (Timing to Be Determined)

This phase would see a resumption of more than one service, with one service being live-streamed. We would also begin to see the opportunities for more social activity using the church building.

Phase II protocols are still in place. All sanitation practices will still be in effect.

- Two services will resume at 8:00 AM and 10:00 AM.
- There will be no more than 45 people in attendance in the entire building at one time.

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- Communion will be given in one kind only (the Host) and will be given by the Celebrant.

PROTOCOLS UNDER PHASE IV (Timing to Be Determined)

Resumption of full parish schedules and sacramental activities as per Diocesan, NYS, NYC, CDC guidelines.