

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

REGATHERING PLAN, AUGUST 2020

DRAFT

Purpose

Every congregation in the Diocese of Indianapolis is required to create a Congregational Regathering Plan. The following protocols will allow the members of St. Stephen's to regather in-person once the metrics in Vigo County conform to Diocesan requirements in Version 2 of the Reopening Guidelines, which can be found at

https://indydio.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Dio_Indy_Reopening_Plan_Version_2_RV3.pdf

Communication

- The regathering plan and its implementation will be communicated to the St. Stephen's community via our weekly E-newsletter, social media, and by mail.
- We will communicate the details of our gathering two weeks before any public in-person worship services.

General Safety Precautions

- Worship services will be limited to no more than 25 people, including presiders and other ministers.
- Organized small group meetings will be limited to no more than ten people.
- Hand sanitizer will be available in the main entryway to the church, assigned rooms, and outside the bathrooms.
- Trained volunteers will sanitize high-touch surfaces after any small group meetings or worship service. Professional cleaners will clean the worship space on Monday night.
- Masks will be required for anyone attending services or small groups. Anyone refusing to wear a mask will be asked to leave, per Diocesan directives. Parishioners will be encouraged to bring masks with them, although some disposable/paper masks will be available.

Building Use during Worship

- Gathering outside is preferred, so smaller gathering may be held, weather permitting, in the Mabley Garden.
- The church (nave) and restrooms will be open during worship services. Other spaces (such as the office, chapel, kitchen, and nursery) will be closed or cordoned off.
- Use of restrooms during worship services will be discouraged. Parents must accompany children to the restroom. Only the accessible restroom in the Great Hall and the two restrooms off Eagle Street will be available. Those using the

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restroom will be required to sanitize high-touch surfaces after each use. Signs will be posted in the restroom with instructions about hand-washing, cleaning surfaces in the restroom, and disposal of paper towels.

- The Garden entrance will be used both to enter and exit the church. Other doors will remain locked (although they remain available as emergency exits). Signs will be posted to direct those attending services to that entrance. The Garden entrance doors will be propped open before and after service.
- Improvements to the HVAC system and opening doors will increase the airflow in the nave.
- Prayer books and hymnals will be removed.
- Toys located in the children's soft space will be removed.
- Use of digital bulletins will be encouraged. Those who bring paper bulletins into the building will be encouraged to take them home with them.

Worship

- Services will continue to stream on Sundays at 10:00 a.m.
- If more than one in-person service is scheduled, ample time will be allowed to clean the church after each service. Doors will be unlocked 5 minutes before the start of each service.
- Congregants will be asked to leave immediately after each service and not gather outside.
- There will be no singing or use of wind instruments.
- There will be no physical contact allowed at the peace or by greeters at the door.
- There will be no in-person coffee hour.
- Offering plates will not be passed. A stationary plate will be placed on a table at the back of the church, and online giving will continue to be encouraged.
- Per Diocesan and CDC recommendations, we will strongly encourage people aged 65 and older or those who have underlying medical conditions to stay home.
- For in-person gatherings, an online software program will be used to make reservations. Some spots will be left open for guests or visitors. Greeters will have a list of those with reservations, will help account for who is in the building, and if necessary, can help with contact tracing.
- Reminders about the symptoms of COVID-19 will be used in signage and communication. Parishioners will be asked to stay home if they have any symptoms. Greeters will receive training about how to approach anyone attending who appears ill.

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- Parishioners will be seated in family groups in every other pew (6 feet spacing). Unused pews will be blocked off. Greeters will seat people from front to back. Parishioners will be released from back to front at the end of the service.
- We will not likely be celebrating communion at our initial gatherings. When we do, it will follow the directives outlined in [the Diocesan Guidelines](#).
- Communion will be distributed from the main floor of the nave at the front of the chancel.
- Those receiving will come up the center aisle, keeping their mask on. They will receive an individual host and refrain from consuming until they have stepped away. Wine will not be included. Communicants will return to their seats using the side aisles.
- Communicants will be instructed to maintain a distance of 6 feet. Markings on the floor will help guide our movement.

Building Use during Small Groups

- All safety protocols (using masks, social distancing, cleaning, etc.) listed above will apply to any small group meetings.
- Any St. Stephen's-related small group meetings will take place in the garden, or the Great Hall, if necessary.
- Restrooms will be open during small group meetings, and other spaces (including the Education Wing) will be unavailable.
- Manna from Seven may continue to use the Canterbury Room and the lower floor of the education wing. They are to use the south-side alley door. Manna volunteers are responsible for the cleaning of high-touch surfaces, including the door, and the lower level bathrooms.
- We encourage 12-step groups who are not already meeting in-person to continue meeting virtually/online. Groups that would like to meet in person must follow all relevant safety protocols outlined above and in their contract.

Public Health Standards

Members of the Regathering Task Force will continue to monitor COVID-19 infections in Vigo County by communicating with the Vigo County Health Department and by checking data from

- The Indiana COVID-19 Dashboard: <https://www.coronavirus.in.gov/2393.htm>
- The Covid Act Now website: <https://covidactnow.org/us/in/?s=817150>
- Regenstrief COVID-19 Dashboard: <https://www.regenstrief.org/covid-dashboard/>