

## **Protocol for Worship and Community Life at the Church of the Incarnation in Phase Three (Green)**

This protocol presents guidelines for in person worship and community life at Incarnation under Phase Three (Green) to help mitigate the risks of gathering in person. Because asymptomatic individuals can still infect those around them, we need to assume that anyone could be a carrier of the virus. Therefore, no precautions, however thorough, can provide 100% protection. If you do not feel safe in returning to church yet because you are in a high-risk category or for any other reason, we encourage you to stay at home and participate in services online.

### **In-Person Limit**

The limit of people for in person gatherings during Phase Three is 50% of the building or room capacity (200 persons). However, 6 feet physical distancing guidelines must be followed which may further reduce maximum attendance.

### **Admission of Worshippers**

Our pre-COVID average Sunday attendance has been about 30 in the summer and about 40-45 from Fall to Pentecost Sunday. We will be able to admit this many in the congregation without worrying about a reservation or rotation system. The choir space will be available for seating. If we need to, we will allow space for seating in the narthex with the doors to the nave open and in the parish hall for virtual participation.

### **Physical Distancing**

In Phase Three, all congregants and clergy who do not live in the same household must sit at least 6 ft. in all directions from one another. We will mark the chairs indicating seating arrangement.

### **Worship**

We will begin in-person gathering outdoors to accommodate those who are not yet comfortable to gather indoors and gradually move indoors as people feel more comfortable ensuring that the safety requirements in this protocol are met.

### **Health check before resuming worship**

All clergy and anyone else who will be assisting in leading worship must check their own temperature and display a normal temperature on the day of the service. It is recommended that everyone check their temperature before coming to church. Anyone who is running a fever or suffering from any respiratory ailment should refrain from attending and, instead, make alternate arrangements.

### **Ingress and Egress**

Parishioners will be instructed to enter and exit through the Narthex door only. The sidewalk and floor will be marked to ensure social distancing and avoid “choke points”. Hand sanitizer will be placed near the Narthex door for people to use when entering and exiting.

**Masks**

In Phase Three all worshippers and clergy are required to wear cloth face masks at all times making sure that the mask covers the nose and mouth. Note: Cloth face coverings should not be placed on young children under age 2 or anyone otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance. Parents of young children may want to alternate coming to in person services so their young children can stay at home. (See CDC recommendations on face coverings.)

**Gloves**

Incarnation will supply nitrile gloves for ushers and cleaners to wear.

**Single use bulletins**

We will provide paper single use bulletins (and a wastebasket for recycling on the way out). All prayer books, hymnals and bibles will be removed from the pews in Phase Two. We will also offer the bulletin online to enable parishioners to access it on their phones and follow along that way.

**In the pew materials**

Hand sanitizer, tissues and a paper disposable bag will be available at the end of each row of chairs. The disposable bags will be collected by ushers wearing gloves and discarded at the end of the service.

**Ushers**

Refer to the Usher protocol for instructions. This protocol will be provided to all ushers.

**Attendance**

During Phase Three we will continue to keep a complete record of all attendees at in-person services to facilitate potential contact tracing by cognizant health authorities. Members of the parish will be informed of this requirement periodically during Phase III. Visitors will be informed when they arrive of the need to provide their contact information as they enter the church. The ushers will assure everyone that these records will be kept in a secure location and never viewed unless necessitated for health reasons.

We will continue tracking worship attendance in the usual way. We will also continue to track our virtual attendance in the same way we have been doing up to this point.

**Chancel Party**

Physical distancing is required in the chancel. Therefore, the chancel party will be kept to two people (celebrant/officiant and liturgical assistant) who will process from the Sacristy.

**Singing and Choirs**

Since choral singing has been noted as one of the prime methods of spreading respiratory droplets, our choirs will not perform or rehearse in-person during this phase. Since singing forcefully expels droplets significantly increasing the distance they can travel (as far as 27 feet), singing by the congregation will also be avoided (though humming while masked is permitted). A soloist may be considered so long as they are masked and/or maintain necessary

distance (30 feet or more) from the rest of the congregation. Alternatively, we can continue with recorded music during this phase. When an organist is available organ solos will be performed.

### **Readers and Intercessors**

One person will read the lessons and lead Prayers of the People from the pulpit as we have done in yellow phase. He/She will need to enunciate through his/her mask in order to be understood by the congregation especially those attending virtually.

### **Physical Greeting and The Peace**

The Peace will be offered with a bow or a wave from their chairs to maintain safe physical distancing. Signs will be posted instructing parishioners to avoid handshakes, hugs, and other physical greeting.

### **Collection**

The collection basket will be placed near the Baptismal font for parishioners to place their giving envelopes as they enter or leave the Sanctuary.

### **Offertory and Preparation**

Elements will not be processed. Instead they will be set-up on the credence table behind the altar. Prior to preparing the table the celebrant and the liturgical assistant will wash/sterilize their hands. There will be no need for the lavabo bowl.

### **Communion**

Ushers will direct communicants to line up in the center aisle while maintaining safe distancing to receive communion (tape will be placed on the floor to indicate proper spacing between persons). They will direct the communicants to and from the altar in a single line and six feet apart. Communicants will come forward one at a time.

Communicants will wash their hands at the sanitizing station by the baptismal font before receiving the sacrament.

While both elements—bread and wine--will be consecrated, only the celebrant will drink from the cup. All others, including the assistant, will receive only the consecrated bread.

The celebrant will wash hands before consecrating the elements and again after consuming the elements and before distributing them.

The celebrant will wear a mask throughout the Eucharistic prayer and the distribution of the elements, removing it only to consume the elements.

The celebrant will wear only an alb and a stole. For the present, a chasuble will not be worn. Communicants will receive the consecrated bread on their palm and take it to their pew to consume it lifting the lower part of the mask and immediately replacing it afterwards.

The celebrant will drop the host onto the communicant's hand, taking care not to touch the communicant's hand. However, should he/she touch the communicant's hand, he/she will set the paten down and sanitize his/her hands prior to continuing.

The Prayer for Spiritual Communion will continue to be part of the Eucharistic Celebration for those who do not feel safe receiving the host.

### **Communion for those not in attendance**

Clergy and LEM's may bring communion, in one kind only, to those who are sick, shut in or otherwise not able to attend. During those visits all health and safety precautions should be observed including the wearing of masks which should always be worn other than for the moment when communion is received. Physical contact will be avoided.

### **Receiving line**

The ushers will help direct parishioners out of the church at the end of the service and/or to fellowship hour while maintaining safe distancing. There will be no "receiving line" at the door.

### **Coffee/Fellowship Hour**

Fellowship may be held indoors or outdoors. Masks and social distancing must be maintained regardless of location. Food may be permitted as follows:

- People may bring their own food and beverages from home but may not share beyond their immediate household.
- Pre-packaged food and beverages may also be served in such a way that people don't have to sort through them for their choices.
- Communal items like coffee pots, pitchers of water, trays of food as well as homemade items (even if individually wrapped) may not be offered.

### **Bathrooms**

Tape will be placed on the hallway floor outside of the restrooms to indicate where people must stand in line to wait, while maintaining a 6-foot distance from each other. Only one person at a time will be allowed in the bathrooms.

### **Counters**

The collection will be left in its usual secure location for three days before being handled again. Moving it as well as counting it will be done with gloves and all other protective techniques.

### **Children and Youth**

Sunday School may not resume in person until further notice due to the great difficulty in maintaining physical distancing. However, intergenerational activities may be permitted provided the children are accompanied by an adult member at all times and ensuring that all the safety protocols are followed.

The J2A class may resume in person in Phase III under the following circumstances: 1) a parental or guardian consent must be procured for the youth to participate, and, 2) Adults/Teachers must

ensure that all health protocols are observed.

### **Adult and Young Adult Formation**

In-person education for young adults (18+) and adults may resume so long as all safety precautions detailed above are adhered to.

### **Nursery**

Nursery may not resume until further notice due to the difficulty in maintaining physical distance at all times.

### **Baptisms**

Baptisms will be conducted as part of the principal Sunday liturgy, preferably on one of the feast days specified in the BCP as particularly appropriate. The safety requirements will be followed. During the baptism itself only the parents and candidate for baptism and godparents will be allowed around the baptismal font. Water from the font will be emptied following the baptismal liturgy.

### **Cleaning/Disinfecting Between Services and Events**

The length of time that COVID-19 remains viable depends on temperature, humidity, and type of surface. Current research for the New England Journal of Medicine suggests that the virus lasts the longest on glass and some metal (such as stainless steel) for up to five days. Therefore, heavy disinfecting and cleaning will be required between services.

Should we become aware that one or more of our parishioners were positive for COVID-19 after attending a service, the meeting space will be disinfected and cleaned unless it can be left empty for 7 days in accordance with CDC recommendations.

### **Office**

Staff members working in the church office must continue to follow physical distancing and sanitary guidelines.

- If a staff member/volunteer is alone in the office/area they do not have to wear a mask. However, they should always have one with them in case they have to interact with another person, even if they are not expecting such an interaction.
- The door between Michelle's office and Harriet's office will remain closed at all times to avoid cross contamination.
- If staff/volunteers are members of the same household they do not need to follow distancing/mask precautions with one another, but they must do so when anyone else is present.
- If an office or area is to be used by more than one individual, then it must be cleaned between each usage. This cleaning/disinfecting can be done by staff/volunteers charged with this task or by the individual themselves as they exit the office/area. Cleaning/disinfecting should be done in accordance with the guidelines found in the cleaning protocol.

### **Ministries**

Food ministries will continue to operate under the same restrictions as Phase II. If you wish to resume another ministry that could be considered life sustaining, you must first review the

specifics with the Bishop and gain his approval before resuming. This would include bringing back ministries that may have temporarily moved to other locations.

If a new activity is undertaken to support a particular ministry the chair of the ministry will notify the Vestry and ensure that the safety protocols are followed.

### **Renters/Community Partner/12 Step Groups**

Such adjunct groups and activities may continue to gather in person and continue to adhere to all of guidelines including social distancing and the use of masks. We will meet with leadership from each individual group to review how they are doing and ensure that they are meeting safety standards.

### **Contact Tracing**

We will be maintaining a log (including phone numbers and email addresses) for all who enter the building in the event that they may have come in contact with someone with the disease and reporting is required. The log will be posted outside the office for people to fill out when they enter the church. In the case of the renters/community partners/12-Step Groups, their own leadership will keep their log.

### **ILLNESS:**

**If someone in the Congregation contracts COVID-19 after attending an in-person church event, they are asked to contact the clergy person or Vestry member immediately. However, as per Dr. Rachel Levine (PA Secretary of Health), churches are not required to report this to public health officials since the commonwealth will already have been notified by the doctor, hospital or lab.**

**We will then notify the congregations that there is a confirmed case of COVID 19 but we will not under any circumstances disclose that person's name. We should not report out if there is a suspected case, only confirmed ones. In the event of a confirmed case, all those who were present with the person who had fallen ill will likely be asked to self-quarantine for 14 days before returning to worship. The meeting space must then be disinfected / cleaned unless it can be left empty for 7 days in accordance with CDC recommendations.**

Developed by the Vestry of the Church of the Incarnation  
September\_\_\_\_, 2020