



EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST

PHASE II GUIDELINES FOR WORSHIP DURING THE PANDEMIC

As you know, our Diocese has been in a period and practice deemed “Phase I” during the COVID-19 pandemic crisis. Bishop Reddall, in conjunction with the Diocesan Task Force, has constructed a three (3) phase program that will, hopefully, culminate in a return to our prior familiar worship practices.

During Phase I, we have been having worship services on video presentation through our Facebook page on our website. We have been having such services, without physical attendance by parishioners, each Sunday at 10:00 a.m., and Wednesday Evening Prayer at 6:30 p.m. There has not been a Eucharist (Communion) component of the services during this phase.

Also, during this Phase I period, there have been no lay ministry meetings at the church, including bible studies. We have not, in addition, allowed the outside community groups who regularly hold meetings on our campus to gather.

We have now been approved to enter Phase II, wherein the “stay at home” part of worship will be lifted, and physical attendance at worship can resume. So, beginning Sunday, September 20, 2020, we will have attended worship! Even more, on that Sunday, Bishop Reddall will be our Celebrant and will lead us in worship. We will have two (2) services: 8:00 a.m., Rite I and 10:00 a.m., Rite II on September 20, and will continue with that schedule going forward.

We will continue, for now, having Evening Prayer on Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m. broadcast on our Facebook page. However, once we have settled comfortably into our Sunday services, we will revert to having Wednesday Evening Eucharist services at 6:30 p.m. as before.

Also, beginning September 20, we will broadcast our Sunday, 10:00 a.m. services live on our Facebook page.

During this Phase II period, the following will be the guidelines for worship attendance:

1. All persons must wear a protective mask upon entry into the church and during worship services. If an attendee does not have a mask, we will provide one at the attendee’s arrival. We will provide special masks for children.
2. Anti-bacterial sanitizer dispensers will be placed at all entrances and in all bathrooms.
3. We will have Kleenex tissues available, and all trash receptacles will be covered.
4. All worshippers will enter through our traditional “red” doors, and all will only exit through the exit doors in our Sanctuary.
5. We will not have coffee hour, meals, or food events.
6. Ministry and other gatherings and meetings will be limited to no more than ten (10) persons at a time.

7. We will not have live, attended Sunday School or Youth Sunday School, although our leaders will continue to have such on line.
8. Worship occupancy will be no more than fifty (50) persons per service. If there is an overflow at any particular service, the number beyond fifty (50) will be seated to watch service in the Parish Hall. The doors to the Sanctuary will remain open.
9. Individual worshippers will sit six (6) feet apart. Family units may sit together, but each such group will sit six (6) feet apart from individual and other family unit worshippers. Every other pew will be unoccupied.
10. Restrooms will be limited to one (1) individual, or family unit, at a time.
11. Communion will be without wine. Only the bread will be distributed. Recipients of communion will receive it six (6) feet apart from one another.
12. Music for our Rite II services will be provided by an organist or other instrumental soloist. There will not be a choir or singer(s) during this phase. There will be no hymnal books during this phase.
13. Offering plates will be located at the exit doors.
14. Greeters and ushers will be available to be guides and of assistance.
15. All doors, restrooms, pews, chairs and tables will be cleaned between services.

At the end of Phase II, or Phase II.5, we will expand the size of gatherings. We will reinstitute congregational and choir singing, and all other music offerings as before. Live, attended Sunday School and Youth Ministry will begin again. A gradual commencement of coffee hour and social gatherings.

Once we reach Phase III, we will return to our pre-COVID-19 practices, including traditional Communion practices, with the exception of encouraging, but not requiring, the wearing of protective masks.

We will provide updates and more information along the way. Thank you for your perseverance and loyalty to our blessed church during these difficult times. I so look forward to our return to our joyous gatherings, beginning Sunday, September 20.

Your brother in Christ,

Fr. Jackson