

## **Proposed Plans for Resuming In-Person Worship**

### **Christ Episcopal Church, Cape Girardeau**



May 22, 2020

We hope to begin in-person worship on Sunday mornings, as well as Monday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings, and Saturday mornings on **June 1, 2020**, provided that COVID-19 cases in Cape Girardeau County have been in decline for 14 days or longer by that date.

We will have the church building thoroughly cleaned and sanitized prior to reopening. We will also contract regular cleaning and sanitizing of the building prior to Sunday worship each week, and require small groups using the building (recovery groups and prayer groups, for example) to clean and sanitize the areas they use before they leave. We will provide all groups with guidelines for social distancing in the building and for sanitizing after use, and we will add these guidelines to the Building Use Agreement for all those using the building. We will also ask all groups to let us know if they find out that someone in their group has been diagnosed with COVID-19. **We will not be allowing larger groups to use the building at this time.**

### **Change of Church Locks**

We will put new locks on the doors of the church building before June 1, since so many groups have used our building, and there are hundreds of keys out there. We will be changing the locks and distributing keys only to group leaders who can ensure that their groups will comply with social-distancing and safe practices during the pandemic.

### **Worship at CEC: Physical Distancing & Disinfection**

At our gatherings, we will announce our safe physical-distancing policies at the beginning of prayer services and other gatherings. We will also ask people to continue safe distancing practices after the worship service when greeting one another in the narthex or outdoors. We will not have Coffee Hour gatherings, and the priest will greet people outside the building in order to discourage the formation of a receiving line after worship.

We will maintain physical distances of 6 feet or more between persons and ask all who gather at CEC to wear face masks from home. We will provide masks for guests and others who need them. We will keep the doors to the church open, and provide hand sanitizer in the sanctuary, parish hall, and narthex. We will also maintain the supply of soap and paper towels in the bathrooms for handwashing. After each gathering, members of our staff and worship team will wipe down surfaces of the chairs and pews and all areas that people have touched. We will email worship bulletins to our members prior to services, and ask that they use their electronic devices to access the bulletin or print it out at home and bring it with them. We will provide a few printed bulletins for those who need them at a welcome table in the narthex. We will keep the offering plate in one spot, allowing people to put their offerings in the plate without passing it from hand to hand. We will continue to encourage people to make donations by mail or electronically. At the Passing of the Peace, we will wave, put our hands to our hearts, or make other friendly gestures towards one another, but not

shake hands or hug. We will continue our service of Spiritual Communion and will not use bread and wine at our Sunday services. We will also not practice congregational singing, but will have organ music and some solo singing, safely distanced. We will keep all worship books and hymnals out of the sanctuary for the time being.

### **Weekly Gatherings**

There are five gatherings in the sanctuary each week: four small prayer gatherings of 12 or fewer persons, and one gathering of 35-50 persons each week. For the smaller gatherings, including the 8 a.m. service on Sunday, there is plenty of space in the Sanctuary to allow people to practice safe physical distancing. For the 10:15 Sunday service, we will use the narthex and parish hall in addition to the sanctuary, spacing people out for safe physical distancing. We will stream our service from the sanctuary to the large screen in the parish hall.

We will also continue to livestream our 10:15 Sunday morning service, as well as some weekday prayers services, so that those members who are protecting their health by remaining at home will be able to continue to connect to our services. We will also continue to livestream some daily prayer services, and to have classes and workshops available online. These have been wonderful for all of us to stay connected, and we want to continue to connect with all of our members who are staying safe at home.

### **Nursery and Sunday School**

Sunday School will not be meeting during the summer and we expect to keep our family groups together with their children during worship this summer. We are unable to practice safe physical distancing in the nursery, so we will keep that closed until it is safe to reopen. We will do all we can to make sure our worship includes songs and lessons that the children, as well as adults, will be able to understand.

### **Hunger Ministries**

The Food Pantry and Community Supper have continued to operate during the shutdown using safe social distancing guidelines and food handling procedures. These ministries will continue to operate safely to provide food for the hungry in our city.

We will check the statistics on COVID19 cases in our area weekly, and if there is a surge of cases, we will seek guidance from the bishop's office about whether or not to close the building again as needed.

### **Communications**

If someone in our congregation is diagnosed with COVID19, we will get word out to the congregation so that anyone who has been in contact will be able to take appropriate precautions. The Vestry will review this plan each month at their meeting, and more often as needed.