

Saint Mary's Episcopal Church

Guidelines for Resuming Public Worship

About these Guidelines

These guidelines have been drafted to reduce our risk in the age of the coronavirus. Under the requirements of the Diocese of West Tennessee, we are permitted to offer in-person worship only by adopting these measures, crafted for everyone's safety. While we cannot eliminate all risk, these steps are designed to minimize that risk. We will succeed only when all of us share in the responsibility for observing the safe practices described below regarding sanitization, hygiene, and social distance. By God's grace we will once again resume public worship safely, returning to our church home where we are blessed by our Creator's mercy, our Savior's love, and the Spirit's strength. — *Fr. Gary Meade*

Before We Can Reopen

- These **Guidelines for Resuming Public Worship** must be approved by the Vestry and the Diocese.
- While Saint Mary's hopes to resume public worship in mid-June, the actual date will be decided as the Vestry receives expert advice on COVID-19 including the medical opinion of Dr. Mary Stuart David, currently employed by the West Tennessee Regional Department of Health.

Preparing the Facility

- Worship and other public areas will be cleaned and disinfected weekly.
- Cushions and books will remain in place but only if the worship space is used exclusively for a single service each week.
- The Wheeler Room will be configured as a chapel for the 8 am Sunday service.
- Six-foot markings will be placed at entrances to avoid crowding on entering.
- Touchless hand sanitizer dispensers will be installed at each entrance.
- Signs or markers will be placed on the pews to encourage social distancing.
- The Holy Water font will remain empty.
- Public worship will be offered at two services only each week:
 - 8:00 am service in Wheeler Room (enter through garden only).
 - 10:30 am service in Nave (enter through front door only).
- Supplies that must be available include: disposable face masks; hand sanitizer; disinfecting wipes; touchless thermometers; facial tissue; trash cans.

Before Worship

- Separate entrances will be used for the two services.
- The door will be propped open for entry and exit.
- On entering, worshipers will be directed to use the hand sanitizer available at the entrance.
- Initially, the temperature of all participants will be taken with touchless thermometers. Those with a temperature of more than 100.4° will not be permitted to enter.

Ushers Will:

- receive training and participate in a “test service” to prepare to reopen;
- pass out bulletins either wearing gloves or after using hand sanitizer;
- use touchless thermometers to take congregants’ temperatures;
- seat all worshippers according to the seating chart;
- ensure that individuals and families maintain six-foot distancing;
- use wipes to disinfect any surfaces touched;
- direct worshipers as they exit, starting from the back of the nave; and
- determine if capacity is reached and, if so, direct additional worshipers to view the service online.
- Ushers will also record attendance and preserve that information for two weeks should it be needed by the Tennessee Department of Health for contact tracing.

During Worship:

- Individuals and family groups will maintain six-foot physical separation at all times.
- Everyone older than two will wear a face mask or covering. Disposable masks will be available.
- Congregants will sit according to a seating chart, following the directions of the usher.
- An offering plate will be placed at the entrance and not passed person-to-person.
- Congregational singing will not be offered at this time.
- The altar party will process from the side rather than the back of the nave.
- The person reading the lessons and leading the prayers will do so from the lectern.
- All leaders of worship will wear face masks, removing them only when speaking.

Morning Prayer or Holy Communion?

- In accordance with Diocesan Guidelines, only **Morning Prayer** (or the Liturgy of the Word) will be offered initially.
- Once it is permitted, **Holy Communion** may be offered as follows:
 - Only the host will be shared (as receiving in one kind is still a full communion).
 - Fr. Gary “suits up” with gloves and N95 mask.
 - Communicants stay at their seats, and the host is brought to them.
 - Fr. Gary will drop the wafer into waiting hands without physical contact.
 - Where two or more are seated together, Fr. Gary will give wafers to the nearest adult for distribution to the rest of the party.
 - After Fr. Gary moves on communicants may lower masks and consume the wafer.

Restrooms

- Only the large restroom in Calcutt Hall will be available.
- A sign inside the restroom will direct users to:
 - Use provided disinfectant wipes on all surfaces touched; and
 - Wash hands for at least 20 seconds using the sink outside the restroom.

Guidance for Worshippers

- The evening before the worship service, each member of the household planning to attend in person worship should check their temperature (should be less than 100.4°) and determine whether anyone has a dry cough or has lost their sense of smell.
- If anyone has any of these symptoms, has been exposed to someone with coronavirus or has tested positive for coronavirus, the household members should remain at home and worship online.
- Persons who are at higher risk for coronavirus (children, persons age 65 or older, those who are asthmatic, diabetic or have a compromised immune system) should assess the degree of risk that is acceptable for them and their household.
- Please wash your hands before you leave home.
- Please bring a clean face mask for each member of the household except for children less than two years old. Wear the face mask throughout the service and when you are near others.
- Maintain a distance of at least 6 feet from other persons at all times.
- Please do not shake hands or otherwise touch people who are not members of your household, including during the Peace.
- There will be no congregational singing until health experts advise otherwise.
- Please follow the ushers' directions for entering and exiting the building.
- Please go straight to your seats at the beginning of the service and leave the building promptly after the service, following the ushers' directions.
- Please place your bulletin in the trash can designated by the church at the end of the service or take it home with you.

Other issues

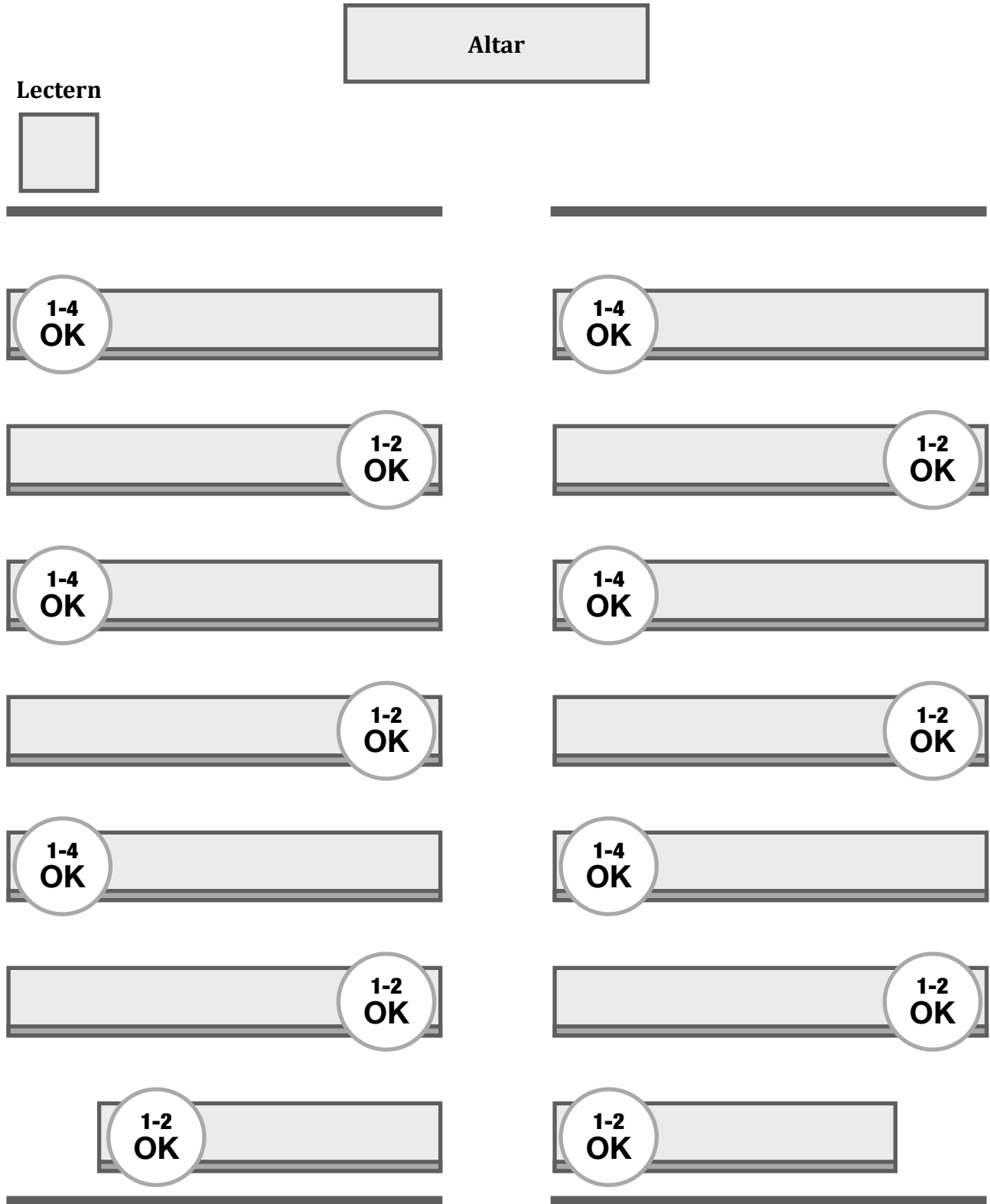
- A "test service" will be conducted with ushers and members of the vestry to evaluate the implementation of this plan and to allow adjustments as needed.
- Worship will continue to be offered online.
- Other gatherings remain suspended: coffee hour, formation, nursery, and outside groups (such as scouts, AA, and NA).
- Based on actual experience and observations, this plan may be adjusted and changed as needed.

Once approved, these new procedures will be shared broadly with the congregation.

Approved by the Vestry on: June 7, 2020

Approved by the Diocese of West Tennessee on: June 8, 2020

Seating at Saint Mary's to Maintain Social Distancing



OK indicates where individuals or family groups of four or less may sit and maintain a safe physical distance.

Benches may be placed against back wall and used for overflow seating as needed. Ushers will adjust seating as needed to maintain a safe distance.

Entrance