

St. Matthew's Episcopal Church Re-opening Plan

To keep everyone safe from the COVID-19 virus, the following re-opening plan was drafted by the Re-opening Committee with the Episcopal Diocese of San Diego's re-opening checklist in mind. The re-opening date is scheduled for July 19.

Pre-opening.

The church will be deep-cleaned at least one week prior to re-opening date of July 19, 2020. All surfaces, door knobs, pews, lecturn, pulpit, etc. will be cleaned. Hymnals and prayer books will be removed from the pews. Rope off every other pew. Post signs encouraging social distancing while in church or in the vicinity of the church. Post Entry Only and Exit Only signs on designated entrance and exit door ways. Put tape on the floor six feet apart to remind people to stand at least 6 feet apart from others when receiving communion. Encourage those over 65 or in a high-risk group to take advantage of following the service via Zoom.

Sundays.

Entrance to the church will be through the main door, the door facing East 8th St. and exit will be through the side door, the double doors facing west. All doors and windows will be opened during Sunday worship service for maximum ventilation.

All congregants are required to wear masks. Masks will be available for those who do not have them. An usher/greeter will hand out single-use worship materials in lieu of Hymnals and Prayer Books. Used worship materials should not be left in the pews, but taken home and disposed of by the user. Congregants will be scanned for their temperature with a touchless thermometer. Anyone with a temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit will be asked to return home.

A maximum of 2 individuals will be seated on a pew assigned for seating, each individual occupying each end of the pew. Up to 3 people from the same household can occupy one pew and they will sit in the middle section.

There will be no choir and congregational singing; the entire service will be spoken. Congregants will maintain a 6-foot distance from individuals who are not of their same household group when exchanging the peace.

The offering plate will not be passed around during Offertory. Instead, it will be placed on a table near the entrance where people can place their offerings as they enter the church. During the Offertory, the acolyte or someone assigned from the congregation will take the offering plate and present it to the celebrant.

The celebrant will greet the congregation at the beginning of the service and provide instructions as needed. After the Peace and before the Offertory, the celebrant will remind those present of the procedures for receiving Holy Communion at this time.

The celebrant and acolyte will go to the sacristy and wash their hands thoroughly before preparing the Holy Table and presenting the bread and wine and the people's offerings. Holy Communion will be administered in one kind only at the foot of the steps leading to the altar. The priest will wear a mask while administering the Sacrament, and communicants are asked to remain standing and avoid touching the priest's hands while receiving. Communicants should come forward in the center aisle, beginning from the front pews, and return to their pews by the side aisles along the walls. Every effort should be made to maintain a six-foot distance from those who are not members of a household group.

The Gospel will be read at the foot of the steps leading to the altar without candles and cross and without an acolyte to hold the Gospel book.

Only one person will be assigned to read the lessons and the Prayers of the People.

For those who are able to stand during the service, it is appropriate to stand for all prayers (including the Great Thanksgiving) in order to avoid using the kneeling benches in the pews.

Masks or other appropriate face coverings are to be worn at all times, except when reading, preaching, or actually receiving Holy Communion.

To maintain a 6 feet distance between individuals not of the same household group, the church can only accommodate up to 30 individuals. If maximum capacity is reached, additional seating is available in the hall where individuals can participate in the service via Zoom.

Hand sanitizer containers will be placed at the entrance to the church and at the center aisle end of alternate pews. Those attending services are encouraged to use hand sanitizer when entering the church and before receiving communion.

General.

The church will be thoroughly cleaned before and after each Sunday when services are held. Volunteers and/or a paid staff will clean the pews, door handles, light switches, restrooms, microphones and other things that are often touched between services.

The parish hall must remain locked before and after each service.

There will be no water in the baptismal font or in the holy water stoup. Pamphlet racks will be emptied; there will be no display of books.

Vestments and linens should be cleaned each Sunday.

After the service, people may greet each other and the celebrant in the courtyard, but must maintain social distancing and are encouraged not to linger. We are not permitted to provide coffee or any other refreshments at this time.

In general, the church office will remain closed except for essential functions. Screening for temperature and symptoms is required for staff members working on site. Volunteers must wear masks and maintain social distancing. Staff or volunteers exhibiting symptoms of respiratory illness must remain at home.