



St. John's Episcopal Church

PLAN FOR REGATHERING

A Phased Approach to Regathering as a Church

July 2020

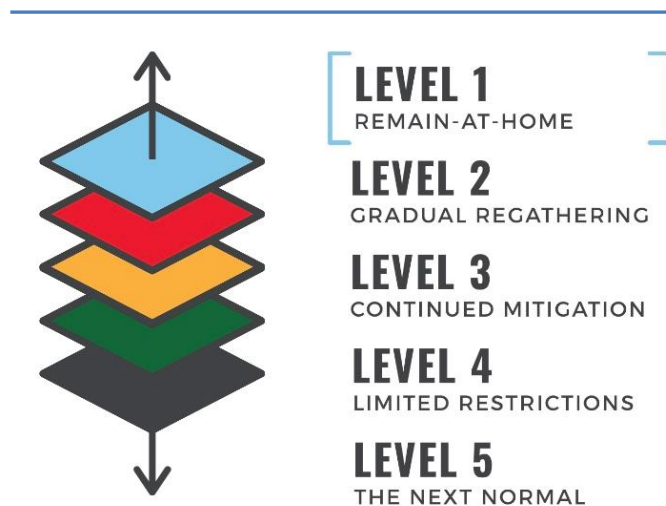


St. John's Episcopal Church Regathering Plan

A plan to allow careful, graduated return to worship with our fellow parishioners in the sacred spaces that we love.

The following plan was developed by our St. John's COVID-19 Task Force, considering local and state rates of virus spread, CDC guidelines, local and state government reopening guidelines, and protocols developed by the [Episcopal Diocese of Florida](#). Our parish regathering plan has been presented to Bishop Howard, and has the approval of the St. John's Vestry.

This is a cautious plan, designed to help us protect the vulnerable among us. We look forward with hope for the decline of the virus and development of a vaccine with an ensuing return to normal worship. In fact, this plan provides for advancement with fewer restrictions as virus activity data allows. The decision-making criteria will be a 14-day decline in the number of new cases, balanced by the percent positive (ratio of new positives per day to total daily tests performed). **This is an evolving situation that will require us to be flexible. Movement between levels may occur in either direction based on virus activity. It is also possible that St John's will choose an approach that blends facets of multiple levels.** In any event, whenever there is a change in status, it will be communicated to the parish.



Level 1: Remain at Home/Worship Remotely

March 15 through present/ongoing

SUNDAY CHURCH SERVICES

Sunday morning service (10:00 am)

- Morning Prayer.
- Recorded and streamed.
- Limited number of choir singers and musicians.
- All worship using online venues.

OTHER MEETINGS: Virtual Platforms; Limited Gatherings

- Adult education, coffee hours and other meetings are held online.
- Compassionate outreach is conducted online to ensure safety of parishioners.
- Pastoral care takes place via telephone or online.
- The physical campus will continue to be closed. Parishioners will not be able to gather or visit, with the exceptions listed below:

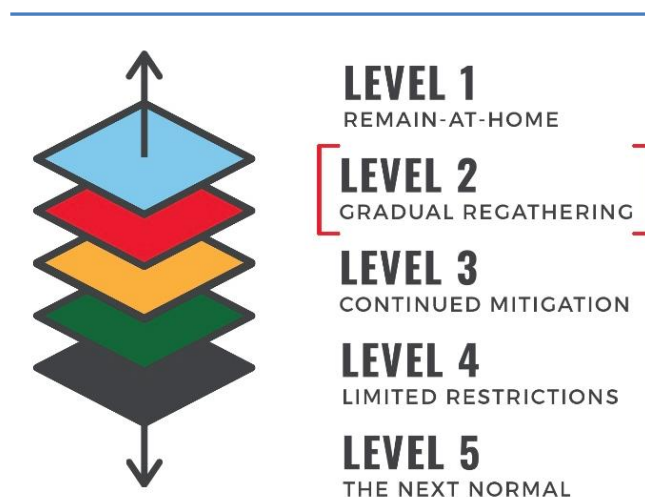
- One clergy member may conduct a wedding or funeral service with 10 or fewer family members present either on campus or off-site, preferably outdoors.
- One clergy member may conduct a baptism in the main sanctuary with less than 10 people, following social distancing, wearing masks, and ensuring proper sanitization.

FACILITY

- The church facility is closed although the work and ministry of the parish continues in many ways.
- Facility sanitization measures are ongoing daily, before and after recording services, and for special occasions.
- St. John's Lively Café: Take-out on a limited basis with limited menu; contactless payment and pickup. No volunteers. Details being developed.

STAFF

- While access to our campus will be suspended, our staff will continue to work, as they have been as this pandemic has unfolded. Office staff is reachable by phone or email.
- Some staff may work in the facility on occasion to perform essential duties. Staff members will work remotely the majority of the time.
- If staff must be on campus, they should sign when they arrive on campus at a designated location just outside the rector's office near the N. Calhoun St entrance.



Level 2: Stay-at-Home/Work Safe/Gradual Regathering

Effective Date: TBD

Virtual gatherings are emphasized but there is movement towards regathering in accordance with the second level of the [Episcopal Diocese of Florida's Protocols and Guidelines](#).

SUNDAY CHURCH SERVICES

Sunday morning service (10:00 am)

- Morning Prayer with or without Holy Eucharist observed.
- Recorded and streamed.
- Limited number of choir singers and musicians.

Sunday afternoon (2:00 pm - 5:00 pm)

- Church open for quiet prayer and reflection. Details being developed.

- 10-person maximum at any one time, including clergy.
- Arrive and depart by half-hour appointment (online and telephone sign up*).
- No passing of the offering plates.
- Nursery remains closed.
- No singing or worship music. No hymnals, BCPs and other objects in the pews.
- Parishioners may bring their own worship aids.
- Following the Leon County ordinance, masks are mandatory and strict social distancing (households together).
- Vulnerable individuals should continue to worship using online venues. The CDC defines this to include adults 65-years and older, people of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions and people who are immunocompromised.
- Single-element Eucharist offered to parishioners in their vehicles, “Communion in Cars.” Details are being developed.

Special Outdoor Worship Services

- Once a month for a larger group; details being developed.

OTHER MEETINGS: Virtual Platforms; Limited Gathering

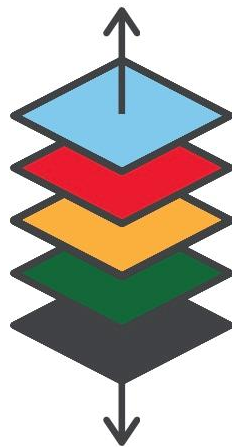
- Adult education, coffee hours and other meetings are held online.
- Church and community groups of 10 non-vulnerable people or less are allowed, properly distanced, with safety protocols and other measures in place, per the Bishop’s Level One guidance, properly coordinated in advance with the parish administrator, using largest available indoor space, or outdoors. Masks are mandatory following the Leon County ordinance.
- Compassionate outreach is conducted online to ensure safety of parishioners.
- Pastoral care takes place via telephone or online.
- One clergy member may conduct a wedding, baptism or funeral service with 10 or fewer family members present either on campus or off-site, preferably outdoors.
- The “St. John’s Diggers,” volunteers who handle upkeep of the historic cemetery, may work together (up to five people) as long as proper distancing is maintained. Masks not mandatory in this setting unless distance between diggers is compromised.

FACILITY

- Facility sanitization measures are ongoing.
- St. John’s Lively Café limited re-opening. Details being developed.

STAFF

- Non-vulnerable staff may return to workspaces in the building at the discretion of the Rector and under the policies and procedures of the personnel committee.
- Staff members who are ill stay home until medically cleared.
- Masks should be worn on entering, exiting the building.
- Masks should be worn when in enclosed space with another person.
- Masks may be removed when working in a separate room, but should be replaced when someone enters.
- Staff should sign in daily when they arrive on campus at a designated location just outside the rector’s office near the N. Calhoun St entrance.
- Staff meetings of 10 people or less are allowed, properly distanced, masks worn, and using largest available indoor space, or outdoors.
- Practice frequent hand washing and provide easily available hand sanitizer.
- Vulnerable staff (CDC defined) may continue to work remotely with care that they have access to full inclusion in meetings and other decision-making processes.



LEVEL 1
REMAIN-AT-HOME

LEVEL 2
GRADUAL REGATHERING

LEVEL 3
CONTINUED MITIGATION

LEVEL 4
LIMITED RESTRICTIONS

LEVEL 5
THE NEXT NORMAL

Level 3: Limited Gatherings/Continued Mitigation/Protections

Effective Date: TBD

Limited gatherings (25-percent capacity, 50-person maximum) and protective measures in place and moving towards regathering in accordance with Level Two of the [Episcopal Diocese of Florida's Protocols and Guidelines](#). This corresponds with continued gradual decline in the number of new local cases, but with continued evidence of community spread of the virus.

SUNDAY CHURCH SERVICES

Sunday Services: *Modified regathering and livestreamed.*

- Worship services continue to be recorded and streamed or streamed live.
- The number of choir singers and musicians is slightly adjusted. Physical distancing continues.
- Congregational singing may be severely restricted or suspended.
- Holy Eucharist modified, to use wafers, touch free, communicants standing as indicated in the Diocese's Level Two guidelines.
- Gradual regathering to (25-percent capacity, 50-person maximum) within the Diocese's Level One and Two protocols concerning 6 ft. separation, masks required, no physical contact, no passing of the collection plates, 50 people or less per worship space, and vulnerable continue to worship online (CDC guidelines).
- Vulnerable individuals should continue to worship using online venues. The CDC defines this to include adults 65-years and older, people of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions and people who are immunocompromised.
- No receiving line after church; maintain physical distancing entering and exiting the church.
- Provide recyclable programs and remove hymnals, BCPs and other objects from the pews.
- Courtyard gatherings for limited numbers with physical distancing and masks.
- Nursery remains closed.

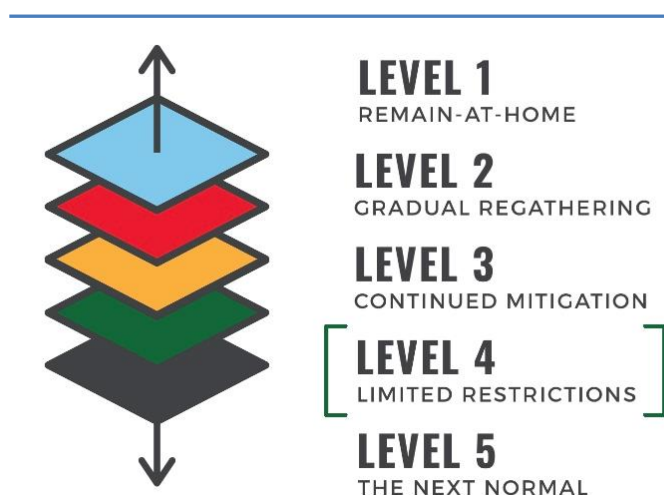
OTHER MEETINGS: Virtual and Limited In-Person

- Adult education, coffee hours and other meetings are held online.
- Church and community groups of less than 25 non-vulnerable people or less are allowed, properly distanced, masks worn, with safety protocols and other measures in place, per Diocese guidance, properly coordinated with the church office and using largest available indoor space, or outdoors.
- Compassionate outreach is conducted according to the rector's discretion, using safety and distancing protocols.

- Pastoral care takes place via telephone, online and some in-person at rector's discretion. Those in high-risk categories should meet by phone or online.
- Weddings, funerals and baptisms conducted on a limited basis as in previous levels or delayed, if possible. In certain circumstances, at discretion of clergy, ceremonies may be directed by single priest for small, 50 person or fewer, events on campus or off-site, preferably outdoors

FACILITY

- Facility sanitization measures are ongoing.
- St. John's Lively Café reopened with protocols. Details are being developed.
- Church offices open with physical distancing to be maintained, and proper sanitation measures be strictly adhered to and enforced. Mask usage strongly encouraged.



Level 4: Returning to Worship with Limited Restrictions

Effective Date: TBD

Limited, but larger gatherings (50-percent seating capacity) with fewer restrictions and moving towards full regathering in accordance with Level Three of the [Episcopal Diocese of Florida's Protocols and Guidelines](#). This corresponds with marked reduction in number of new local cases.

SUNDAY CHURCH SERVICES

Sunday Service: Larger regathering (50-percent seating capacity) and livestreamed.

- Worship services continue to be livestreamed and recorded.
- The number of choir singers and musicians is expanded. Choir singers expanded, but still restricted and carefully distanced.
- Congregational singing may still be restricted.
- Holy Eucharist modified, toward full communion per the Diocese's Level Three guidelines.
- Gradual regathering to (50-percent capacity) within the Diocese's Level One, Two and Three protocols concerning distancing, masks, no physical contact, and vulnerable.
- Hymnals, BCPs and other objects return to the pews.

OTHER MEETINGS: Virtual and Limited In-Person

- Adult education, coffee hours and other meetings are held online and in-person.
- Small groups may meet in-person with limited physical distancing, safety protocols and other measures in place, per Diocese's guidance, in coordination with church office.
- Compassionate outreach resumes, using safety and hygiene protocols.

- Pastoral care in person resumes.
- Weddings, funerals and ceremonies permitted on campus, at 50-percent seating capacity.

FACILITY

- Facility sanitization measures and protocol signage are ongoing.
- St. John's Lively Café is open with protocols. Details being developed.
- Outside groups and events welcomed.
- Church offices open.

Level 5: The Next Normal

Effective Date: TBD

A return to gathering together as the body of Christ. We will phase-in full worship, communion and other activities in consultation with health professionals and as recommended in Level Three of the [Episcopal Diocese of Florida's Protocols and Guidelines](#).

Key Sources

Plans

- Episcopal Diocese of Florida. *Protocols and Guidelines for Regathering for In-Person/Onsite Worship*. May 17, 2020.
- Leon County Government. *Leon County COVID-19 Response & Re-opening Plan: A Roadmap to Protect, Mitigate and Recover*. May 21, 2020.
- Florida Office of the Governor. *Safe. Smart. Step-by-Step. Plan for Florida's Recovery. Report to Governor DeSantis from the Re-Open Florida Task Force*. April 29, 2020.
- The White House. *Guidelines for Opening Up America Again*. April 16, 2020.

COVID-19 State & Local Data

- Florida Department of Health [COVID-19 Dashboard](#)
- Johns Hopkins University & Medicine [Coronavirus Resource Center](#)

Health Protocols

Center for Disease Control (CDC)

- Church – [Interim Guidance for Communities of Faith](#), Revised May 22, 2020.
- Office & Employees – [Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers Responding to Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#), May 2020.
- Restaurants (Café) – [Considerations for Restaurants & Bars](#), Revised May 27, 2020.

Notable Scientific Articles

- Kimberly A. Prather, *et. al.* "Reducing transmission of SARS-CoV-2," *Science*, May 27, 2020. Lists the evidence for aerosol transmission and explains what people need to do to protect themselves.
- Monica Gandhi, *et. al.* "Asymptomatic Transmission, the Achilles' Heel of Current Strategies to Control Covid-19," *New England Journal of Medicine*, May 28, 2020. The failure of symptom-based screening to identify a high proportion of contagious residents highlights the need to find other ways to control spread in all assembled settings.
- Nathan W. Furukawa, *et.al.* "Evidence Supporting Transmission of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 While Presymptomatic or Asymptomatic," *Emerging Infectious Diseases*, May 4, 2020. SARS-CoV-2 transmission in the absence of symptoms reinforces the value of measures that prevent the spread of SARS-CoV-2 by infected persons who may not exhibit illness despite being infectious.