

The Episcopal Diocese of Texas

Template for Re-Gathering

Phase II Planning

Request for Regional Bishop's Confirmation of Plan to Resume In-Person Worship and On-site and Off-site in person ministries.

To restart in-person worship:

The decision to begin worshipping in person again is one that is made by the rector (or Head of Congregation) and with the approval of the regional bishop, with careful consideration of the following:

- 14 days of declining cases and that hospitals are not overloaded;
- Congregation's readiness to practice health protocols including physical distancing throughout Phase II, expressed in a plan submitted to and approved by the regional bishop.

The congregation's regathering plan should be prepared as a collaboration between the clergy and lay leaders of the congregation. This template is intended to reflect key elements of the conversation and planning. Other factors may be important to you and your congregation. Church offices in the Diocese of Texas may be reopened based upon contextual moves by local civic leaders. As this is a regional plan, we will make these decisions through the regional offices based upon local health and civic leader guidelines.

While the decision to move into Phase II protocols will be dependent upon the head of congregation and regional bishop, neighboring congregations are encouraged to work with each other on reopening dates. This would be an important sign of unity, solidarity, and communication among the clergy and leaders of our diocese that have a common mission.

Congregations need to work with their regional bishop to determine readiness for reopening. In order to receive permission from your bishop, these questions should be answered, and the congregation will need to be prepared to fulfill the expectations found in the approved plan prior to return to worship in the church.

Some church buildings are too small to provide in-person worship while maintaining physical distancing required in this phase. These congregations may need to worship in a parish hall or outside, in a space that is large enough to provide safe distances.

All worship, bible study, service, and gathering approaches must be approved by the regional bishop.

The Mission Amp team will help heads of congregations and clergy prepare to answer the questions and follow the guidelines, much as they did as we moved to online worship through Holy Week and Easter.

Congregation

Location *

City

County *

Region *

Convocation *

Head of Congregation/Vicar/Rector *

HOC's Contact Email *

HOC's Contact Phone Number *

Name of Clergy Person or Lay Leader Coordinating Worship if not Rector/Vicar

Date for which you hope to be given permission to resume in-person worship *

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	
Month	Day	Year	

General Considerations

Given the CDC guidelines that encourage special efforts for those over 65 and those of any age with underlying conditions, how will you provide continued access to worship for those who cannot attend in person? (For example, livestreaming or pre-recorded services) What plans do you have, if any, to upgrade to quality of or otherwise change online offerings? *

What guidance will you offer to those at higher risk from COVID-19? In addition to other factors spelled out below, all persons are expected to wear face masks during Phase II, including worship leaders and celebrants. *

In what way will you support and reinforce the expectation that all present in public worship and activities wear masks? *

Do you rent or share space with any outside organization?

- No
- Yes

If yes, describe provisions approved by the Vestry/Bishop's Committee for use when the buildings reopen. *

Proposed Schedule

In addition to worship service times, please include scheduled times for cleaning areas, as well as sufficient time for participants in one activity to leave before those for a subsequent activity arrive.

Sunday*

Monday*

Tuesday*

Wednesday*

Thursday*

Friday*

Saturday*

Attendees/Capacity

Pre-shut down Average Sunday Attendance *

Where (in what area of the facility) do you plan to worship? *

Seating capacity if full: *

Number of worshippers for which you plan upon resumption:*

Number of spots to reserve for guests per service: *

Number of choir members/musicians pre-shut down: *

Seating capacity for altar choir/musicians: *

Number of choir members/musicians for which you plan upon resumption: *

Seating capacity for altar area: *

Number of clergy and servers to be in the altar area: *

How will you collect RSVPs for worship services? *

Who will greet arriving worshippers and direct them to seating, clarify distancing requirements, and "close" the service to additional worshippers if/when capacity is reached? *

How will pews be marked and used to encourage sufficient social distancing? *

How will you discourage clustering or parking lot gatherings following the service? *

Eucharist and Distribution of Communion

Reminder: Only the celebrant will partake of the chalice

How will communion be distributed? *

By whom? *

Service Ministries and Other Ministries

Please describe your plan for *each* ministry activity individually.

Purpose: *

Coordinator/Leader(s): *

Email and phone numbers of Coordinator/Leader(s) *

Maximum number of participants: *

Area in which group will meet (minimum 6ft for social distancing; singing requires extra distance and attention): *

What provisions will you make for cleaning the spaces used before and after events? *

Cleaning

Who will be responsible for cleaning the church? Employee(s)? Contractor? Volunteer(s)? *

How will the pews and other high-touch areas be cleaned between uses? *

On what schedule will the bathrooms be cleaned and restocked? *

Are other modifications or signage needed to support social distancing in bathroom usage?
(Taping off every other sink, providing additional soap or towel dispensers, etc.) *

Signage

Where will you post reminders about COVID-19 symptoms and reminders not to attend if sick? *

How will you use signs, floor taping, or other visual guidance to reinforce the need for social distancing? *

Case Contingency

In the case of the diagnosis of infection in someone who has been at the church after reopening:

It is possible that after regathering, a person may expose the congregation to the COVID-19 virus. If that happens, those gathered will be asked to return to a 14-day quarantine and church may have to return to virtual worship during that period.

It is also possible that after regathering, the community in which the congregation exists reinstates "stay at home - work safe" measures of Phase I. If that happens, those gathered will be asked to return to a use of virtual worship until their county, city or town returns to Phase II.

How will you inform those who were present with the person diagnosed? *

How will you protect the privacy of someone infected while sharing essential information? *

Person at the Diocese you will inform: *

Company you will use to professionally clean space, or other plan for sanitizing: *

Should the rector/vicar/head of congregations get sick or need to quarantine, who has been designated to take up duties of leadership and communication with the congregation and Diocese, if necessary? *