

All Saints, Sunderland, Regathering Plan – Moving Towards Reduced Restrictions

13 April 2021

All Saints is Committed to continuing to serve our Lord, Loving our Neighbors, and keeping our Parishioners and Friends of All Saints safe during the Pandemic. This is how we intend to proceed as we begin to enter our next phase of Regathering.

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1. Parishioners Quick Reference

- a) The overall approach to Regathering will be consistent with Diocesan guidance and follow the slow and patient process described in **Section 2**. Our approach includes some key concepts such as “hybrid activities” and avoiding actions that could exclude people from participating in Parish life (implicit and explicit exclusion). We will do things in a way that leaves no one behind.

- b) **Section 3** covers our next phase of Regathering in detail. This phase will include some in-person activities, but will have limitations (e.g., restricted seating, social distancing, mask guidelines, bathroom usage limited to one level of the Parish Hall) and certain restrictions to prevent the spread of COVID-19 (e.g., types of food & beverages & limited group singing). This phase will also include changes to the service format with offering plates at entrances, and communion distributed as we leave the service. Special events such as weddings, baptisms and pastoral care will occur with precautions determined by the Rector. All Parish events, including worship (**Section 4**), committee meetings and social events – whether on or off campus (**Section 5**) -- will be conducted in accordance with Parish guidance. Everyone who participates in-person will be asked to sign a short, one-time “covenant” to protect each other.
- c) The sequence of in-person regathering activities is discussed in **Section 3.1**
- d) Worship Services are covered in detail in **Section 4**. Services will be held with a minimum of two trained ushers whose primary responsibilities are to ensure safety, compliance with rules, and that people are treated with sensitivity; compliance with ushers’ directions is mandatory (see **Section 7**). There will be safety procedures on seating, capacity, use of disposable handouts and singing. Sunday services will include an 8:00 AM spoken service and one 10:00 AM contemporary service with music. Once we’re up and running, both services will be “hybrid” (in-person *and* on Zoom) and one of the services will be recorded for those unable to attend.
- e) Parish meetings, including social events, (**Section 5**), will follow all parish requirements, regardless of location (including off-campus), and must be approved in advance by the Rector. Non-Parish organizations interested in using on campus facilities should contact the Campus Use Coordinator.
- f) Policy regarding fully vaccinated persons (**Section 6**) describes some relaxation of limitations concerning fully vaccinated people, subject to specific approval by the Rector:
- g) Campus Use by non-Parish organizations will require each organization to complete a “covenant” tailored to their particular use. (See **Section 9**.)
- h) The ECW will ensure adequate maintenance of safety supplies for cleaning, masks and appropriate signage (**Section 10**).
- i) The Connections Commission, In coordination with the Rector and the Senior Warden, will ensure that information is “pushed” to the Parish and relevant elements of the public. (**Section 11**)

2. Overall Concept

In our Parish, regathering will be a deliberately slow and patient process. It will be tailored to our particular parishioners and their needs, as well as our belief that we need to continue to be about the Lord’s business in our community. We will, of course, comply with the Bishop’s conservative approach, which sets minimum health and government conditions that must be met before we change phases as well as standards of conduct for each phase. We’ll take no action inconsistent with it or the requirements of law. We will ensure that no one is left behind by using “hybrid” and other methods. (By “hybrid” we mean in-person activities having the ability of individuals to also attend electronically and participate as they have been able to do in “Zoom” worship.)

We will ensure that appropriate safeguards are in place for each increment and everyone in the Parish will have a place in what we do, whether she or he chooses to join activities physically or to participate via Zoom or another alternative. Implementation will consider each specific activity and circumstance, including the foreseeable risks and benefits of each. Changes from the status quo will be modest and incremental. Planning will consider the following potential situations: indoors, outdoors, parishioner events, other user events, vaccinated individuals, unvaccinated individuals and online-only events. During planning for each event, leaders will consider whether the specific situation could explicitly *or implicitly* exclude someone from attending, and will implement methodologies to prevent such exclusion. (Considerable sensitivity is needed with this aspect since simply asking whether someone is willing to attend an in-person event could force a less-than-candid response from the person.) Individuals will always be welcome to wear a mask, whether they are required or not. Records of in-person attendance will be maintained for a month following a gathering, to allow for contact tracing should it become necessary. Everyone attending an event in person will be asked to subscribe to a onetime “covenant” to protect each other (Available at allsaints1692.org in May). This need will be made widely known, as will the substance of the Covenant; and, attendance in person at a Parish event will signify that the individual has subscribed to it. Signage will explain this as well. Ushers will have copies available and will receive signed copies from parishioners and leave them with the Parish office. This gradual process will need the help of almost all of us in one way or another. Frankly, ensuring one another’s safety and continuing ability to worship meaningfully will require a lot of work, but we’ll ask everyone to help as able, and spread the effort for the common cause. Finally, understanding that times of difficulty are also times of opportunity we’ll stay attuned to the lessons we’re learning and what they may offer for our future, confident that our God intends only what is best for us.

3. How Our Next Phase Will Look

In many ways there won’t be much change. There will be some brief in-person gatherings which will be like this: wearing of face coverings will be required; there will be no group singing; no touching between people of different households; required distancing inside buildings (at least 6’) will be obtained by markings on pews and walkways (households will be able to sit together); there will be fresh air ventilation (jackets or sweaters may be desirable). When events are outside, the same precautions will apply except, while individuals are in their designated seats/areas they may remove their masks. (Masks and distancing are required whenever people leave those positions.) Groups up to 25 may meet outdoors on the campus, with the Rector’s concurrence, with all COVID safeguards in place.

People who are COVID-19 positive may not attend until 7 days after the conclusion of two negative tests; actively sick people who are not known to be COVID-19 positive may not attend until 10 days after illness ends without testing; symptomatic people who do not become actively sick may not attend until 24 hours after the end of all symptoms.

Ushers or activity leaders will determine seating locations. In-person gatherings indoors will be no longer than an hour; less is better. Offerings will be by offering plates at entrances; communion will be consecrated using gloves and masks with wafers, only, and distributed (wafers only) as we leave the service.

Ordinarily there will be *no* food or drink during gatherings; when approved in advance commercially pre-packaged, individual servings may be made available on a self-serve basis. Bathrooms on the same level of the Parish Hall as the event may be used but only with hand sanitizer, wipes and prominent signs asking users to wipe every surface they touched as they are leaving; areas beyond bathrooms will be marked for no admittance (and people are encouraged to plan ahead to minimize the need.) Locations where people gather will have touch surfaces wiped with sanitizer wipes after use; windows and doors to rooms that will be used will be opened to ventilate those areas for an hour between activities; hand sanitizers will be at entrances and their use encouraged on entering and leaving a gathering.

Baptisms and anointings will occur subject to precautions established by the Rector. Weddings and funerals will follow all the requirements above. Pastoral care will be by electronic means or in-person at the discretion of, and subject to precautions established by, the Rector. Ushers and convenors of activities are responsible for compliance with all appropriate precautions. Attendance records (available at allsaints1692.org in May) will be emailed to the Parish Office or maintained by the convenor of an activity for at least a month following an event for contact tracing purposes. (Ushers will provide such records to the Parish Office.) Appropriate COVID-19 signage remains in place.

All Parish events, including worship, committee meetings and social events – whether on or off campus -- will be conducted in accordance with Parish guidance and limitations.

3.1 Sequence of Regathering Activities (all complying with Parish COVID guidance) (All dates are estimates and subject to change)

- A test of in-person procedures in a Vestry-only, in-person-only 8:00 AM Worship Service; and a 10:00 AM Contemporary Service on Zoom only) ([16 May 2021](#))
- Parish worship services for 2 weeks ([beginning 23 May 2021](#))
 - First week (One 8:00 AM Hybrid Spoken Service; one 10:00 AM Zoom-only Contemporary Service)
 - Second week (One 8:00 AM Hybrid Spoken Service; one 10:00 AM Hybrid Contemporary Service)
- Limited Parish activities in Parish Hall for 3 weeks as approved by the Rector. Examples include small committee meetings, prayer sessions, or small classes) ([beginning 6 June 2021](#))
- Parish hall also available to small non-Parish activities as approved by the Rector ([beginning 27 June 2021](#))
- Sunday School is expected to start hybrid activities in September 2021.

4. Worship Services

In-person Services are conditioned upon leaving no less than 2 trained ushers whose primary responsibilities are to ensure safety, compliance with rules, and that people are treated with sensitivity; compliance with ushers' directions is mandatory. Seating will be in marked areas only; only disposable service handouts will be provided (although worshipers may bring their personal books). There will be no congregational singing indoors; indoor singing by masked ensembles is allowed (limit to four singers and other Diocesan restrictions apply). Congregational singing outdoors will be permitted with everyone masked.

Sunday Services will include an 8:00 AM spoken service and one 10:00 AM contemporary service with music. We intend both services to be Hybrid and a recording of at least one of these services will be made available for those who could not attend.

The Music Director will ensure that copyright requirements are met.

4.1 Indoor-Service-specific guidance

- No more than approximately 30 people may occupy the brick church at one time (*total -- including all celebrants, ushers, musicians, etc.*) Due to changes in COVID conditions and guidance the actual number will likely change week to week; check the Parish newsletter each Friday for the current number.
- Attendance will be on a first come, first served basis. However, people who intend to attend in-person services are asked to inform the church office by phone or email; while this will not guarantee a seat if others arrive first, it will assist planners.
- If attendance exceeds the authorized maximum attendance the large second floor Parish hall room (entered by the double doors into it) may be used as overflow area to watch the service on Zoom, as determined feasible by the ushers, and only if an usher can also be in attendance while no less than two ushers remain at the brick church. We intend that an individual Zoom alternative will always be available. **When maximum attendance has been reached in any location others will not be admitted**, but will be invited to join by Zoom and given Zoom instructions by the ushers which could be applied from any appropriate location.

5. Meetings

Parish meetings, including social events, will follow all parish requirements, regardless of location (including off-campus). All "leave no one behind" considerations apply (including off-campus.)

Hierarchy of preference by meeting type: Zoom; outside; inside subject to all precautions including maximum COVID room occupancy.

All in-person meetings must be approved in advance by the Rector. Non-Parish organizations interested in meeting on campus will be informed for planning purposes as in-person meetings begin, but non-parish activities will not begin until three weeks after parish meetings have begun. **Maximum attendance for specific rooms will be established.**

Convenors of in-person activities are responsible for compliance with all Parish guidance – with particular attention to potential implicit exclusion issues (see the 3rd paragraph of Section 2) -- and for maintaining a record of attendance for at least a month or emailing the record to the Parish Office. (Available at allsaints1692.org in May)

6. Policy regarding vaccinated persons

Subject to prior approval by the Rector, groups of fully vaccinated people (i.e., two weeks have passed since completion of the applicable vaccination series) may meet for parish purposes without masks and social distancing. But only if the fact that only fully vaccinated people will attend is *solely* the result of happenstance and *not* the result of anyone being explicitly or implicitly excluded. Example: this might occur if all members of a previously established committee happen to have been vaccinated; it may *not* be the result of a change in group composition to achieve that result or by excluding individuals from joining the group because they are not vaccinated. All other precautions (e.g., sanitizing, airing rooms) still apply. Zoom and Hybrid meetings are always an alternative.

7. Ushers

The Head Usher will recruit sufficient ushers to support the planned service schedule with no fewer than 2 ushers per service. Ushers may not serve until they have been trained.

Initial usher training will be conducted by the Rector and the Senior Warden, after consultation with the head usher. Follow-on training may be conducted by them or the head usher.

Usher responsibilities will include:

- Being knowledgeable of all Service precautions and the maximum attendance allowed for the respective service and overflow area.
- Ensuring compliance with precautions and attendance maximums.
- Being aware of available alternatives for individuals who must be denied entry and preferred methods of offering alternatives.
- Preparing the worship area and overflow area by ensuring appropriate floor markings and pew markings are in place, that all common touch areas have been wiped with sanitizer, hand sanitizer and wipes are available near all main doors, and the areas are well ventilated by windows and doors.
 - Ushers will also confirm that signage, hand sanitizer and wipes are in place in the relevant restrooms and restricted areas are marked.
- Ensuring sufficient disposable service sheets are on hand; non-disposable materials will not be provided.
- Ensuring all people in attendance comply with all precautions or are asked to leave the service.

- Being aware of appropriate responses to individuals who refuse to comply with requirements. (Contact a Parish officer present in the event of continued refusal.)
 - Applying appropriate end-of service procedures including wiping of common touch areas, disposal of service sheets, and airing of rooms if they will be used again within hours of the end of the service.
 - Maintaining a record of attendance using attendance sheets at each main entrance (available at allsaints1692.org in May). Offer copies of the Covenant to attending individuals, receive signed copies from individuals, and leave the signed Covenants at the Parish Office at the end of the Service.
- Completion of End-of-Service checklist record. (Available at allsaints1692.org in May)

8. Electronic Technical Arrangements

The Hybrid principle applies: all services and other meetings of the parish will be contemporaneously accessible by Zoom, to include the means for people not physically present being able to actively *participate* (e.g., readers, prayer leaders, speakers...). Recordings of at least one service will be made available following the service until the following week.

A committee designated by the Rector will plan the appropriate means of ensuring events are hybrid, which could range from smartphone to smartphone Zoom connectivity, through use of multiple computers, smart screens and cameras.

Advisors to small groups will be available to assist them in ensuring all small group meetings are accessible by Zoom *regardless of the location of the meeting*. (Example, an off-campus social event could be made accessible by smartphone Zooming.)

Equipment: in time to acquire the needed equipment, the committee will determine the appropriate mix of equipment needed to implement these plans, inform the Vestry; the Vestry will determine the appropriate means of funding these requirements and do so in time to acquire the equipment and train in its use. (While good user experiences are the objective, it is understood that Hybrid events may begin before intended technical quality can be achieved, further improvements may have to occur over time.)

Requirements for individual technicians and their training will be determined by the committee and plans implemented to meet those needs. Consideration will be given to inviting students to participate and be awarded service hours (through appropriate channels).

All significant worship services will have a technician other than the celebrant participating to manage the Zoom and other technical requirements, including microphone and camera changes, as well as “spotlighting”, recording, etc.

After some experience with Hybrid Zoom activities, consideration will be given to adding live streaming.

9. Campus Use by Other Organizations

Such use will be coordinated by the Campus Use Coordinator following normal procedures.

Each organization will complete a “covenant” tailored to their particular use that will:

- Be consistent with Diocesan requirements.
- Be consistent with Parish COVID guidance and restrictions.
- Place responsibility for compliance on the group leadership.
- Incorporate contact methods between the Rector and the Organization for any COVID events.
(Sample available at *allsaints1692.org* in May).

Each organization will:

- Comply with their covenant.
- Be responsible for completing and maintaining records of in-person attendance for at least one month after each event.
- Notify the Rector of any COVID event.

10. Preparation and Maintenance of Safety Materials

The ECW will ensure:

- Continued adequate supplies of sanitizer, wipes and masks.
- Positioning of sanitizer, wipes, masks and sign-in sheets at entrances of buildings.
- Maintaining appropriate COVID signage on building exteriors and restrooms.

11. Connections Commission

In coordination with the Rector and the Senior Warden, the Connections Commission will ensure that information is “pushed” to the Parish and relevant elements of the public concerning:

- The Regathering process approved by the Vestry.
- Service procedures including limitations and communion process, requested advance notice, the hybrid approach, overflow opportunities, disposable-only service materials to be provided, attendance records, and recommended attire due to fresh-air ventilation.
- The Covenant process.

Information provided to the Parish will include:

- Contacts for individuals or organizations with questions
- Advance notice of significant upcoming Regathering events and changes (e.g., save the date; notice of attendance requests
- Hard copies of information for individuals as appropriate