



**St. Martin's
in-the-Field**
Episcopal Church

Plan for Returning to Full In-Person Worship

Assumptions

1. The safety and care for our parish family is our primary concern as we consider this return to full in-person worship.
2. We will follow all COVID guidelines provided by The Episcopal Diocese of Maryland. The emergence and spread of the Delta variant, or other factors that may come into play over the course of the coming weeks and months, may mean that we re-impose certain restrictions on our worship or life together as a community.
3. Our parish family is in various stages of readiness to return to unrestricted in-person worship.
4. Those showing symptoms of COVID-19 or who do not feel well should stay at home and worship with us online.

From the Diocese: Yellow Phase—our current phase

FELLOWSHIP

- Fellowship time may resume with individually served food and beverages, but outdoors only. Indoor fellowship may resume, but not with food or beverages yet.
- “Coffee hours” or other social time may resume outdoors, with individually packaged and served food or beverages.

INDOOR SINGING

- Masked congregational indoor singing may resume with sufficient buy-in from congregation. Unmasked singing indoors is not an option except for choir.

MASKS and SEATING

- ***Masking indoors is optional with a known level of 90+ percent vaccination status***, sufficient buy-in from congregation and reasonable accommodations made for non-vaccinated, but children and others who are not eligible for vaccinations are still at unknown risk for long term health issues from catching COVID.
- ***Seating capacity may be increased up to 100 percent and social distancing reduced or eliminated with a known level of 90+ percent vaccination status***, sufficient buy-in from congregation and reasonable accommodations made for non-vaccinated.

REMOVAL OF MITIGATIONS

- Only one mitigation restriction should be removed at a time, with at least two weeks between each to allow for feedback.

Conclusions drawn from June, 2021 all-parish survey

1. 95% of respondents intend to be fully vaccinated by mid-August
2. Currently 2/3 of respondents live in households that are fully vaccinated—an additional 10% of households intend to be fully vaccinated by mid-August
3. Almost 20% of respondents live in households where children are not yet fully vaccinated
4. Almost 30% of respondents believe we should offer a mask-optional service
5. 32% of respondents believe that masks and social distancing should remain as is for all services
6. Almost 60% of our congregation is concerned about returning to full indoor worship without some kind of mitigation (masks, social distancing or both, or herd immunity being reached first)
7. 52% of our congregation is concerned about singing indoors during worship without some kind of mitigation (masks, social distancing or both, or herd immunity being reached first)

Return to Full In-Person Worship

St. Martin's will return to full in-person worship at each of our services in stages with the guidelines provided by the Diocese of Maryland. This will be done with care for the health and safety of our beloved parish family as a priority, living fully into our Baptismal Covenant of loving our neighbors as ourselves and respecting the dignity of every human being.

Simply because the diocese says we can move into a new phase, or that we can reduce or remove certain restrictions does not mean that we will. We will remove restrictions as they make sense for our community overall taking into account the needs and safety of us all. As you will read below, we have taken special care with when and how we resume in-person worship, and when masking and social distancing are relaxed for the 10:30 a.m. service which the majority of our families with children attend.

As of June 20, 2021 50.72% of Anne Arundel residents are fully vaccinated (two doses plus two weeks) per MD Department of Health. We recognize that there are those who cannot receive the vaccine for medical reasons or due to current restrictions on age. We will rely on our parish family to be honest about their vaccination status, and to have agency in providing safety measures that ensure the health and safety for themselves and each member of their family.

We expect that those who are not fully vaccinated (both doses and two weeks) will wear masks when inside our buildings whether for worship, fellowship, or education.

Online broadcast of our 10:30 a.m. worship service will continue as we return to full in-person worship.

The term "Mask Optional" does not mean no masks. Mask optional means that if you are fully vaccinated and feel comfortable doing so, you may choose to not wear a mask in worship. However, if you or a member of your family would like to remain masked, that is perfectly fine. We anticipate that a portion of our parish family will remain masked during worship for the foreseeable future. We want everyone to feel comfortable worshipping in-person; we need everyone to be safe when they come to church.

If we do not have a sufficient number of volunteers to fully staff our worship services (ushers, greeters, acolytes, servers, lectors, intercessors, chalice bearers—when we can resume receiving both the bread and wine) we will not hold in-person worship. To sign up to serve in any of these ministries please email [Hilary Golden](#) our Parish Administrative Assistant.

The reduction of restrictions such as mandatory masking and social distancing will happen gradually and in conjunction with diocesan guidelines. However, the emergence and spread of the Delta variant, or other factors that may come into play, may mean that we re-impose certain restrictions on our worship or life together as a community.

We will also phase in a return to fellowship after both morning services with lemonade and coffee hour. We anticipate a return to full in-person education for all ages between the two Sunday services, starting in the fall, and will make a determination about what restrictions are needed, if any, in September.

You will note the general dates for each phase. This allows for flexibility in responding to feedback and any other developments that arise before moving into the next phase. We will communicate with the congregation in multiple ways as we move through the phases and will rely on you to read the communications we send and check the website for the latest information.

PHASE 1 (early July)

8:00 a.m.

Mask optional
Social distancing still in place

10:30 a.m.

Resume in-person worship
Mandatory masks and social distancing
No congregational singing
Bread-only standing station for Communion

PHASE 2 (late July)

8:00 a.m.

Mask optional
Removal of social distancing
Resumption of gospel procession and Servers
Resumption of bread-only communion at the altar rail

10:30 a.m.

Mandatory masks and social distancing
Congregational singing resumes
Resumption of Servers
Resumption of bread-only Communion at the altar rail

PHASE 3 (late August)

8:00 a.m.

Masks Optional
Lemonade on the Lawn resumes after worship
Resumption of bread and wine at communion (or as directed by the Diocese of Maryland)

10:30 a.m.

Mandatory Masks
Removal of socially-distanced seating
Lemonade on the Lawn resumes after worship
Resumption of bread and wine at communion (or as directed by the Diocese of Maryland)

PHASE 4 (mid-late September)

8:00 a.m.

No changes from previous phase

10:30 a.m.

Masks Optional
Resumption of Acolytes
Resumption of Children's Chapel
Resumption of Adult Choir