

St. Thomas Episcopal Church  
Sun Valley, Idaho  
October 5, 2020

## St. Thomas Fall and Winter 2020/21 Worship and In-Person Gathering Plan

We have been blessed this summer and early fall with the opportunity to hold large in-person worship services in the field across from the church. These services were well received and many of us rejoiced at the opportunity not only to worship God amidst the beauty of creation, but to do so alongside others as the parish community we love and celebrate. Thanks be to God for this time together.

However, Blaine County recently moved from COVID risk level orange to risk level red within the Harvard Global Health Institute's four-tiered framework. While this risk level will fluctuate over time, it seems likely that we will remain at or above risk level orange for the foreseeable future. Therefore, based on conversations with Rebecca Waycott, Senior Warden, and parishioner Tom Archie, M.D., as well as the Vestry's recent decision to endorse the County's use of the Harvard Dashboard, I am canceling our large-scale in-person worship services.

We have developed the following plan for the fall and winter that will outline the various worship and gatherings scenarios possible depending on which risk level - yellow, orange or red - our county finds itself. The Blaine County Guidelines for each risk level informs various scenarios. For more information on the Blaine County Guidelines please visit:  
<https://www.co.blaine.id.us/DocumentCenter/View/13171/Dashboard-10-1-2020>

**Cautionary Note:** While this plan still provides an in-person worship offering, please do not attend church if you have symptoms of COVID-19, concerns about possible infection, fall into a vulnerable category, or are at all concerned about being around other people.

As of **Sunday, October 11th** our primary service will be a pre-recorded virtual offering of Morning Prayer. This will include music, choral singing, lessons read by parishioners, a sermon and prayers offered by the Clergy. These services will be emailed to the congregation on Sunday mornings and posted on St. Thomas' website.

### Scenario One: Red (Critical Risk, no in-person gatherings)

If Blaine County is at risk level red, all worship and meetings will be held virtually.

### Scenario Two: Orange (High Risk, significant restrictions on in-person gatherings)

#### In-Person Worship Opportunities

In addition to our weekly virtual service we will hold **two small scale Rite II Eucharists**. One service will take place on Tuesdays at 5:30 pm, the other will take place on Thursdays at 1pm. Both services will be held on the courtyard; reservations are not required but attendance will be limited to 30 people.

Communion will be shared utilizing the format that Bishop Thom introduced during his recent visitation. This involves each parishioner obtaining a sealed miniature plastic eucharistic vessel that contains both bread and wine. In addition: The peace will continue without touching.

Bulletins will contain the entire service and books will not be used. You can pick up bulletins on a table in the courtyard.

No offering plate will be passed, but a plate will be easily accessible for your offerings.

There will be no music.

Masks will be required, and hands must be sanitized.

### **Glorious Gatherings – Children and Youth**

Beginning Sunday, **October 18<sup>th</sup>**, there will be a Sunday in-person offering for children and youth called **GLORIOUS GATHERING**. Led by Sara Gorby and Liz Hickey, children and youth will meet in Classroom 4/5 for personal check-ins, prayers, music, stories, activities, crafts and games. These gatherings will be limited to 8 children and youth. Weekly reservations are required. Sara Gorby will circulate a sign-up sheet via email each week.

**LOGISTICS:** Young people will gather with Liz and Sara on the Labyrinth at 9:30am. Sign-in will be required. We will take parent cell phone numbers. If there is an issue, we will send you a text. Before meeting their parents at the Labyrinth for pick up at 10:15 am, participants will each receive a pre-consecrated communion vessel from Sara and Liz.

**SAFETY PROTOCOL** will be consistent with all other parish activities.

- + Masks required
- + Wash hands upon entering classroom
- + Hand sanitize as necessary
- + Maintain space between young people. (the best we can)

As always, **DO NOT BRING A YOUNG PERSON IF THEY ARE SICK.**

### **COVID-19 SYMPTOMS INCLUDE:**

- + Fever
- + Fatigue
- + Dry Cough
- + Difficulty Breathing

### **Open Sanctuary for Prayer**

The Sanctuary will be open for prayer and private mediation on Mondays and Wednesdays from 11am to 4pm. The windows will be open and air circulating.

## Scenario Three: Yellow (Moderate Risk, limited restrictions on in-person gatherings)

### Inside In-Person Worship Services

Both services will be identical Rite II Eucharists. Communion will be shared utilizing the format that Bishop Thom introduced during his recent visitation. This involves each parishioner obtaining a sealed miniature plastic eucharistic vessel that contains both bread and wine.

The peace will continue without touching.

Bulletins will contain the entire service and books will not be used. You can pick up bulletins on a table on the patio outside the front entrance to the church.

Ushers will stand nearby, but at a safe distance, and will welcome without shaking hands.

No offering plate will be passed, but a plate will be easily accessible for your offerings.

Music will be offered, but there will be no singing.

Please sign-up for one of the Sunday services in advance at the St. Thomas website ([stthomassv.org](http://stthomassv.org)) or by calling Judi Fuller at the church office. If you do not sign-up, you will be offered a seat only once it is obvious that pew space is available. Some seating will be saved at each service for visitors who do not know to sign-up. We also ask that you be thoughtful about how often you sign up, to ensure that everyone who would like to attend an in-person service has the opportunity to do so.

### Entrance, Seating and Masks/Sanitizer

Attendees will enter through the front doors by the church bell.

Each pew will be marked to indicate where to sit. Couples and families will be seated together.

Masks are required for all participants. Disposable masks will be available to people who do not bring one with them.

Hand sanitizer will be available liberally.

Attendance at these services will be restricted to 40 people to assure safety by appropriate distancing. Staff will organize the church space and mark pews in a way that spaces families and individuals safely apart. Pews and other hard surfaces will be wiped clean following services. The windows will be opened, and the fans will be adjusted to raise air and ensure proper ventilation.

### Electronic Giving

For those who prefer online giving over plate offerings, St. Thomas will offer at least one online giving vehicle.

## **Nursery**

Nursery cannot be offered safely, but all parishioners are encouraged to welcome children and families in services - understanding that, at times, small children make noise! Lots of fun noise!

## **Glorious Gathering - Children and Youth (Continues as specified in stage Orange, with the exception that Communion will be shared by the Clergy)**

### **In-Person Meetings**

Beginning on Monday, October 19th, parish ministries will be permitted to gather for meetings on Tuesdays and Thursdays. There will be one meeting space available at 10am and 2pm on each day; please reserve a time with Judi. These gatherings will be limited to 10 people. All participants must wear masks and sanitize hands and each ministry leader is responsible for ventilating the space (open windows).

### **Please Note:**

This is a plan. It can, and will, be changed and modified depending on community health trends. However, to ensure the well-being of our entire parish community, we expect full compliance with this plan. Your cooperation is appreciated.