REGATHERING IN THE DIOCESE OF WYOMING

Finding Our “New Normal” in the Age of Covid-19
A BOLD NEW WORLD AWAITS US!

- We can combat fear with knowledge
- Church can maintain worship and community life
- We are showing God’s compassion in community
- God is with us in the midst of all of this
- We are God’s hands and feet at work in the world
- Let us move forward with hope, confidence, grace, courage, compassion – and most of all, love!

"BEHOLD, I AM DOING A NEW THING; NOW IT SPRINGS FORTH, DO YOU NOT PERCEIVE IT? I WILL MAKE A WAY IN THE WILDERNESS AND RIVERS IN THE DESERT."

ISAIAH 43:19

THE Episcopal DioceSE OF WYOMING
WHAT WILL THE CHURCH BE WHEN WE ARE RELEASED INTO THIS NEW WORLD?

- The world in front of us is nothing like the world behind us
- Sharing God’s word may require some new tools in the toolbox
- The Church is not a building! It’s all of us building the Kingdom
- The Holy Spirit is already breathing new life into the church – believe it!

The Church is not a building. It’s the people

- Acts 8:3
- Acts 12:5
- 1 Cor. 3:9
- 1 Peter 2:5
God may be giving us an opportunity

- To preach the Good News in exciting new, missional ways
- To care for this fragile earth, our island home more intentionally
- To be thoughtful stewards of financial and human resources
- To lead with knowledge and data-driven information to help our communities cope with the unknown road ahead.
A REIMAGINED COMMUNITY NEEDS VISIONARY LEADERS

- The Diocese of Wyoming will rise from this crisis and we will emerge as a reimagined community
- Visionary leaders can help guide our communities through this pandemic or any emergent crisis
- We all have a role to play in defeating this outbreak of COVID-19
- Adaptive leadership will plant seeds for future mission as we grow in love and grace
We thought we would be able to come back together in celebration on Easter Sunday but we found out that “Easter” is a moving target.

There is uncertainty as to when we will be able to gather as before, pass the Peace, celebrate the Eucharist and get back to “normal” worship and pastoral care.

Not all states, cities or counties are on the same schedule with reopening plans.

A phased plan is the way forward.

First we washed our hands, then we cancelled large gatherings, then we dropped from groups of 50 to groups of 10 and closed our church buildings. Next, we enacted shelter-in-place protocols, started wearing masks and practicing stringent physical distancing.

The three-phased Guidelines for Opening Up America Again, based on the advice of public health experts, will help us reopen and protect lives.
A PHASED APPROACH PROVIDES AN OPPORTUNITY FOR:

- Imagination about our future
- Allowing people to worship the way we’ve been doing so digitally along with a measured return to our church buildings
- Learning to reach God’s people in new and exciting ways outside the walls of our churches as we embrace adaptive mission options

The Virus is here to stay for the foreseeable future. Thus, we must carefully balance risks and benefits as we move forward with phased re-entry.
WHERE WE ARE NOW - CHURCH

- Churches are doing virtual worship, meetings and Bible studies – buildings are not open; restricted to gatherings of 10 or less
- We are limiting service ministries to safe protocols dedicated to essentials: service for the homeless, food provision, health related ministries, financial contributions
- $1 million Grant being deployed into our communities
WHERE WE NEED TO BE TO BEGIN PHASING INTO REOPENING

- Sustained reduction of new Covid-19 cases for at least 14 days (not just flattening, but downward curve)
- Local hospitals are safely able to treat all patients requiring hospitalization without resorting to crisis standards of care
- The city, county or state is able to test people with COVID-19 symptoms.
- The state or county is able to conduct active monitoring of confirmed cases and their contacts.
GUIDELINES FOR ALL INDIVIDUALS – THROUGHOUT THE PHASING

- Continue to practice good hygiene
- Wash your hands
- Avoid touching your face
- Sneeze or cough into a tissue, or the inside of your elbow
- Disinfect frequently used items and surfaces
- Follow physical distancing protocols – 6’ between
- Use face coverings or masks while in public if physical distancing cannot be met
## GUIDELINE CRITERIA

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<td>Calculations of Square Footage Capacity</td>
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<td>Physical Distancing of 6 feet</td>
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<td>Contact-less Eucharist, Passing of Peace, Blessings, Collection</td>
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<td>Face Coverings Required</td>
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<td>Max Attendance <em>(must have space for 6ft distancing and sqrt capacity)</em></td>
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GUIDELINES FOR CHURCHES – THROUGHOUT THE PHASING

- Enforce physical distancing and protective equipment
- May provide temperature checks
- Do not allow symptomatic people to join worship services or meetings
- Sanitize, sanitize, sanitize
- Use of and disinfection of common and high-traffic areas
PHASE ONE: RETURN TO CHURCH BUILDINGS

- All vulnerable individuals should continue to shelter in place
  - Individuals 65 years of age and older, including clergy and staff
  - Individuals with serious underlying health conditions, including high blood pressure, chronic lung disease, diabetes, obesity, asthma, and those whose immune system is compromised.

- All individuals, when in public, should maximize physical distance from others and wear masks or face coverings.

- Church offices may open in spaces large enough for physical distancing with approval of bishop.
PHASE ONE - RETURN TO CHURCH SERVICES

- With approval of bishop, small church worship, including weddings and funerals, may restart in indoor or outdoor spaces large enough for physical distancing.
- Attendees shall be required to wear masks or face coverings and submit to temperature check if requested
- No passing of the peace, collection plate, anointing or hands-on blessings
- Celebration of Eucharist will have restrictions – no common cup
- No baptisms, other than emergency
- Continued virtual worship
- Visits to senior living facilities and hospitals to provide pastoral care prohibited
PHASE ONE

10 Steps to return to Church Buildings

1. Calculated the square foot capacity of ministry areas to maintain a 6ft physical distancing?
2. What is your max capacity based off of 120 sqft per person? _______
3. Is your max capacity over ___? If it is, remember in Phase 1 the maximum attendance is still __.
4. Does your parish have resources to provide face coverings to those who may not have any?
5. Have Safety Protocol signs been posted inside and outside of your church?
6. Have Cleaning Protocols been established for all areas of your church?
7. Are you in compliance with your County Health Guidelines?
8. Have you answered the 13 questions from the Bishop with your Diocesan Staff representative?
9. Have you created your emergency plan?
10. Have you received permission from the Bishop? YES, proceed!
PHASE TWO: CONTINUED REOPENING OF CHURCH BUILDINGS AND ACTIVITIES

- All vulnerable individuals should continue to shelter in place
  - Individuals 65 years of age and older, including clergy and staff
  - Individuals with serious underlying health conditions, including high blood pressure, chronic lung disease, diabetes, obesity, asthma, and those whose immune system is compromised such as by chemotherapy for cancer and other conditions requiring such therapy.

- All individuals, when in public or worship space should maximize physical distance from others and wear masks or face coverings.

- Socializing in large group should be avoided if appropriate physical distancing cannot be observed.

- Visits to senior living facilitates and hospitals to provide pastoral care prohibited.
PHASE TWO – REOPENING WORSHIP

- With approval of bishop, larger church worship, including weddings and funerals, may restart in spaces large enough for physical distancing.
- Attendees shall be required to wear masks or face coverings and submit to temperature check if requested.
- Celebration of Eucharist and contact restrictions still in place.
- No baptisms, other than emergency.
- Continued virtual worship.
- Sunday schools and church schools can reopen following appropriate protocols.
- Visits to senior living facilitates and hospitals to provide pastoral care prohibited.
PHASE THREE – RETURNING TO CHURCH BUILDINGS AND ACTIVITY

- Vulnerable individuals can resume public interactions, but should practice physical distancing, minimizing exposure to social settings where distancing might not be practical

- Resume all unrestricted staffing of facilities

- Visits to senior care facilities and hospitals can resume

- Large venues can operate under limited physical distancing protocols

- Missional and administrative capacities created
PHASE THREE – WORSHIP IN CHURCHES - THE NEW NORMAL

- Increased small group gatherings
- Increased missional gatherings
- Continued virtual worship and meetings provided
- Continued pastoral calling
- Return to service ministries with addition of new community relationships
OUR FUTURE IS IN FRONT OF US – CELEBRATE THE NEW WORLD WE LIVE IN!

► We are already learning from this event as a church

► Build in platforms for livestreaming, uploading worship services, gathering online

► Continue to create meetings and programs that are accessible online in real-time

► We are now a new missional community of Jesus Followers – embrace it!