



October 12, 2020

Greetings all,

At the August meeting of CEC's Vestry, the decision was made to form a Re-Gathering Task Force. This Task Force, which included members of the Vestry and the Altar Guild, spent several weeks closely examining the guidance offered by the State of Connecticut, Uncas Health District, and ECCT regarding safe practices for gathering in-person during the COVID-19 pandemic. Together, the Task Force created a set of guidelines for re-gathering specific to CEC.

These guidelines were presented and unanimously approved by the Vestry at its September meeting with the understanding that changes will likely occur as research into COVID-19, particularly how it is spread, is on-going. The full guidelines as approved by the Vestry are available online at christchurchnorwich.org/covid-19-updates. An abbreviated version is included with this letter and contains the most pertinent information related to our re-gathering for regular Sunday worship.

Our guidelines, in accordance with guidance from ECCT, anticipated a return to in-person worship in Connecticut's Phase 3 of re-opening which, as of the writing of this letter, is scheduled to begin on October 8, 2020. However, as has been the case throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, circumstances change rapidly.

Norwich and the surrounding communities in southeastern Connecticut are currently experiencing a significant surge in community-spread of the disease. While the greater state of Connecticut may be entering Phase 3, Norwich has re-entered what has been described as a modified Phase 1. This modified Phase 1 includes guidance to avoid any large in-person gatherings, particularly indoor gatherings. As our commitment to help protect the most vulnerable in our community (both at CEC and Norwich-at large) must remain our top priority, we will be delaying our re-gathering until the number of cases in Norwich declines and it is deemed safe to gather again.

Even as we delay our re-gathering, preparations for our return to in-person worship will continue. As such, we request that you familiarize yourself with the enclosed abbreviated guidelines which will be in full effect when we return to in-person worship. These guidelines are critical to our efforts to gather safely and to continue to help slow the spread of COVID-19. We also continue to urge those in high-risk groups and those over the age of 65 to continue to stay safe and stay home. A virtual online worship service will continue to be available via YouTube each Sunday for those in the high-risk group.

In addition to the abbreviated guidelines, you will also find a survey regarding your own worship attendance plans. We ask that you take a few moments, complete the survey, and return it to CEC via mail or through the office door mail slot as soon as possible. If you

prefer, you can also complete the survey online at ***christchurchnorwich.org/covid-19-updates***

God is still with us and continues to invite us into deeper relationship with God and one another even as we live into new ways of being the church. Let us continue to hold one another and our community in our prayers as we look again to the day when we gather again in person.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Stacey".

The Rev. Stacey Kohl
Priest-in-Charge, Christ Episcopal Church
rector@cecnorwichct.org
573-268-6402

ABBREVIATED RE-GATHERING PLAN FOR CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, NORWICH

Before you come:

- We encourage those in high-risk groups, including those over the age of 65, to continue to stay safe and stay home and join us for our virtual online service via YouTube.
- We encourage those in high-risk groups who chose to attend CEC's in-person worship to first consult with your primary health care provider regarding your risk factors and how to stay safe.
- Please stay home if you feel ill, or are experiencing flu-like symptoms or those associated with COVID, including sudden loss of taste or smell, shortness of breath, fever, muscle aches, diarrhea, or persistent cough, or if you know or suspect you been exposed to COVID-19, or have tested positive for COVID-19. Be sure to notify the church office if you are ill at home or are hospitalized.
- In order to aid with contact tracing should a case of COVID-19 occur at CEC, we will be tracking attendance each week. Online registration will be available each week via a link the e-News. For those unable to register online, a paper sign-in sheet will be available when you enter the church.
- The church will be fully cleaned and sanitized each week.

When you arrive:

- There will be one Sunday service at 9 a.m. until further notice. Indoor service seating will be limited to 100 persons; outdoor services will be limited by socially distancing space.
- Communion will not be served at any service until at least Phase 4. Services will be Ante Communion, Morning Prayer, or Spiritual Communion.
- Masks are required for all attendees and must be worn so as to cover the nose and mouth at all times while on CEC property, including the parking lot. Those who cannot wear masks for certified medical reasons will be seated in a separate area of the church with greater social distancing observed.
- Social distancing of at least 6-feet should be observed at all times, including when entering and exiting the church.
- Parking is restricted to the south lot, near the main church entrance, and all attendees will enter through the main door of the church, either via the stairs or the accessible ramp. All other doors, including those leading into the parish hall, will remain locked and closed. No entry into the sanctuary will be allowed from the stairwells.
- For those who did not register for service online, please sign in on the paper form provided.

- A collection plate will be placed at the entrance to the church for pledge envelopes and other offerings. No offering will be taken during the service.
- Hand sanitizer will be provided at the entrance to the church and should be used before you are seated.
- An usher will lead you and your group to the next available pew based on CEC's Re-Gathering seating plan. Please do not seat yourself, as our seating plan has been designed for optimal social distancing.
- Please remain in your seat for the entire service, including the Peace. In the event of an emergency, instructions will be given to safely evacuate the building.
- Please use the restroom before attending church. However, should you need to use the restroom during service, please exit your pew via the nearest aisle and make your way to the back of the church. An usher will guide you to the nearest restroom and assist you in returning to your seat.
- Antiviral/antibacterial wipes will be provided in each restroom. Please wipe down all surfaces following the instructions provided in the restroom. Ushers can assist you if needed.
- At the end of the service remain seated until the usher directs you to exit your pew. Please do not exit your pew until instructed by an usher to do so.
- Any after-service socializing should take place outside, observing all social distancing guidelines with masks in place. There will be no Coffee Hour and no food allowed.
- Anyone who does not comply with these guidelines, including any spoken guidance given by an usher at the service will be asked to leave the service immediately.

CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH RE-GATHERING QUESTIONNAIRE

Please complete the following survey either online at christchurchnorwich.org/covid-19-updates or by using this paper form. Should you choose to fill out the paper copy, please return it to Christ Episcopal Church, 78 Washington Street, Norwich, CT 06360 or drop it in the mail slot at the church office door.

Your answers will important in aiding us to plan future services and events.

In the last six months, I have watched one or more of CEC's YouTube videos.

Yes ___ No ___ Not Sure ___

In the last six months, I have used a computer or television to participate in online worship services elsewhere.

Yes ___ No ___ Not Sure ___

In the last six months, I have attended in-person services at another church.

Yes ___ No ___ Not Sure ___

I have read the document "What To Expect When We Re-Gather," and I feel comfortable attending in-person services as described.

Yes ___ No ___ Not Sure ___

I have read the complete document "CEC Re-Gathering Task Force Report" posted on CEC's website.

Yes ___ No ___

I have a question and would like to speak with someone from the Re-Gathering Task Force directly for further clarification.

Yes ___ No ___

Name: _____

Telephone # _____

Best time of day to call: _____