



## CHRIST CHURCH IN LA PLATA/CHRIST CHURCH WAYSIDE PHASED RE-OPENING AMID COVID-19



*In alignment with the Diocese of Washington and the state of Maryland, this document outlines parameters for the safe operations and gathering of our church communities during the COVID-19 pandemic. To protect older members and those with underlying health conditions making them more vulnerable, the Christ Churches will maintain protocols more stringent than those allowed by civic authorities.*

### **PHASE I (March 15-May 28)**

#### **Suspension of Live In-Person Public Worship Services and Public Use of Property**

Civic authorities shut down all public gatherings. Numbers of known infections and deaths rising or near peak levels in Maryland and the District of Columbia

#### **SPIRITUAL LIFE**

- ◆ The Sunday morning joint service is held on Zoom and live-streamed via Facebook.
- ◆ Each weekday evening a Compline service is held on Zoom.
- ◆ A Wednesday evening Bible study is held on Zoom
- ◆ Pastoral care and prayer gatherings are done via telephone or online.
- ◆ Funerals are performed only at graveside, following limitations set forth by civic authorities. Social distancing and the use of masks are required.
- ◆ No baptisms or weddings are performed.
- ◆ Vestry members stay in contact with parishioners on their call lists.

#### **BUILDINGS**

- ◆ Church buildings are closed, and rental operations halted.
- ◆ 12-step groups suspend gatherings at the church.
- ◆ No other persons are to enter the building at this time, except:
  - Parish Administrators check the mail and complete essential business operations.
  - Rector hosts the Sunday online service from the La Plata parish hall (stronger internet)
  - Organist and Cantor (married to each other) record music for worship.

#### **MISSION AND OUTREACH**

- ◆ The Food Pantry in La Plata continues operations with altered delivery system – volunteers deliver pre-assembled bags of food to drivers or walk-in clients. Clients are asked to wear masks, and those not in cars to maintain 6-ft distance.
- ◆ The Plentiful Table monthly meal for people in need is suspended.

#### **ADMINISTRATION**

- ◆ All meetings, book groups, Bible studies, and prayer services take place online.
- ◆ Online giving is facilitated and encouraged.
- ◆ Offerings will be secured and counted twice a month. Counters must wear gloves and maintain a distance of 6 feet while counting the offering.

**PHASE II** (*Charles County entered Phase II 5/29/20 and remains in Phase II as of 7/30/20*). **Significantly limited Live In-person and Public Use of Property**

Civic authorities allow for limited numbers of persons to gather.

Public health indicators for Phase 2 include:

14-day consecutive declines in numbers of people testing positive for Covid-19, hospitalizations, and intensive care bed use. There is widespread testing and contact tracing available on the County level, as well as a sufficient supply of personal protective equipment. There is also evidence that our health care systems are not in danger of being overwhelmed.

### SPIRITUAL LIFE

- ◆ The Sunday morning joint service is held on Zoom and live-streamed via Facebook.
- ◆ Once a month an additional outdoor service can be held at each church, adhering to state guidelines on distancing and masks.
  - Registration is required and list retained for tracing in the event of a participant's positive Covid-19 test
  - All participants are to have submitted a signed Diocesan Covenant for Regathering form
  - The priest uses a sound system to avoid raising her voice
  - The service is paperless; links to the bulletin are provided in advance, and participants encouraged to read them off electronic devices, or print at home and recycle at home.
  - There is no congregational singing
  - An offering basket is provided, and online giving encouraged.
  - Communion is offered (wafers only) and distributed to people in their seats by the clergy wearing masks and gloves.
- ◆ Each weekday evening a Compline service is held online.
- ◆ A Wednesday evening Bible study is held online.
- ◆ Pastoral care and prayer gatherings are done primarily via telephone or online; home communion can be offered outdoors, with masks and gloves.
- ◆ Funerals are performed only in funeral homes, or at graveside, following limitations set forth by civic authorities. Social distancing and the use of masks are required.
- ◆ Outdoor weddings can be performed, adhering to state guidelines on distancing and masks.
- ◆ Vestry members stay in contact with parishioners on their call lists.

### BUILDINGS

- ◆ Church buildings are open on a limited basis; all persons wear masks and wipe down areas used with anti-bacterial wipes.
- ◆ Parish Administrators return to regular business hours, observing precautions.
- ◆ The Nursery School renting in La Plata re-opens, as authorized by the State of Maryland
- ◆ 12-step meetings reconvene, outside the buildings only

## OUTREACH/MISSION

- ◆ The Food Pantry in La Plata continues operations with altered delivery system – volunteers deliver pre-assembled bags of food to drivers or walk-in clients. Clients are asked to wear masks, and those not in cars to maintain 6-ft distance.
- ◆ The Plentiful Table monthly meal for people in need remains suspended.
- ◆ Social media announcements and presence will be increased, inviting people beyond the congregations to join in worship, study, prayer and outreach activities.

## ADMINISTRATION

- ◆ Meetings, book groups, Bible studies, and prayer services remain online.
- ◆ Online giving is facilitated and encouraged.
- ◆ Offerings will be secured and counted once a week. Counters must wear gloves and maintain a distance of 6 feet while counting the offering.

### **PHASE III – *No earlier than October 1***

#### **Moderately-limited In-person Public Worship Services and Use of Property**

Even as State of MD remains in Phase 2 of reopening, civic authorities continue to ease restrictions on public gatherings. Numbers of known infections and deaths have fallen to near zero in the county. Widespread testing and tracking is underway.

## SPIRITUAL LIFE

- ◆ The Sunday morning joint service is held at 11 am on Zoom and live-streamed via Facebook. It is streamed from the sanctuary of Christ Church in La Plata (stronger internet), and has attendance both online and in-person.
  - Worshipers known to be infectious, actively sick, or symptomatic are not to attend.
  - Worshipers with underlying health risks are discouraged from attending services. This point will be included in our weekly E-news, website and other communications.
  - All participants are to have submitted a signed Diocesan Covenant for Regathering form
  - Reservations must be made online or over the phone, with a wait-list maintained after 50+/- (max capacity)
  - There is no congregational singing; the handbell choir can play, standing 6-ft apart.
  - Greeters are trained and use a checklist (*see Appendix B.*)
  - On arrival
    - a person is greeted and checked against the registration list.
    - Anyone turned away due to space restrictions can register there for the next week's service.
    - Contact information is taken down for any who have not pre-registered; list retained for tracing in the event of a participant's positive Covid-19 test

- Standard screening questions are asked (coughing, travel, possible exposure to an infected person)
  - Each person is asked to use the hands-free hand-sanitizer stationed at the entrance.
  - Masks must be worn
  - Pews will be marked to ensure 6-ft distancing between household groupings
  - Clergy, lectors and prayer leaders use a sound system to avoid raising voices
  - Screens have been installed on which in-person participants can follow the liturgy and see the online participants
  - Prayer books and hymnals have been cleaned, boxed and stored away.
  - The service is paperless; links to the bulletin are provided in advance, and participants encouraged to read them off electronic devices, or print at home and recycle at home.
  - There is no congregational singing
  - An offering basket is provided, and online giving encouraged.
  - Communion (wafers only) are to be distributed by clergy wearing masks and gloves, coming around the congregation to ensure safe distance between worshippers is maintained.
  - All restrooms will be open for use and will be posted with proper cleaning instructions, as well as a basket of proper cleaning supplies for individuals to use after personal use (See Appendix A: Cleaning Protocols and SOPs)
  - Sanitizing and restroom use protocols continue as in Phase II (*See Appendix A.*)
  - There is no social time before or after worship, or sharing of food
- ◆ A 9 am service can be held at Christ Church Wayside, provided fans have been installed and air flow issues resolved, using the above protocols, with these exceptions:
- The service will not be live-streamed
  - The capacity for safe distancing is 20+/-
  - All restrooms will be open for use and will be posted with proper cleaning instructions, as well as a basket of proper cleaning supplies for individuals to use after personal use (*See Appendix A: Cleaning Protocols and SOPs*)
  - Sanitizing and restroom use protocols continue as in Phase II (*See Appendix A.*)
- ◆ Prayer meetings, Bible and book studies remain online.
- ◆ Sunday School for children can be offered in person, with social distancing and masks
- ◆ Pastoral care and prayer gatherings are done via telephone or online.
- ◆ Funerals, weddings and baptisms can be offered inside or out, following limitations set forth by civic authorities. Social distancing and the use of masks are required.

## BUILDINGS

- ◆ Church buildings are open on a regular basis; all persons must wear masks and wipe down areas used with anti-bacterial wipes, leaving signs indicating locations have been sanitized.
- ◆ Restroom protocols are followed (*See Appendix A: Cleaning Protocols and SOPs*)
- ◆ Parish Administrators return to regular business hours, observing precautions.

- ◆ The Nursery School in La Plata continues operations, as authorized by the State of Maryland.
- ◆ 12-step meetings continue to meet outside. If Vestries approve indoor use once infection rates have dropped, but before a vaccine is available, group leaders will be required to sign the covenant in Appendix C and provide assurance that tables and chairs used have been wiped down with anti-bacterial wipes.
- ◆ Outside groups may not use the space. If the Vestries change that policy before a vaccine is available, outside groups will be required to sign the Covenant (*Appendix C*), as above.

### OUTREACH/MISSION

- ◆ The Food Pantry in La Plata may revert to previous protocols, allowing one client into the space at time, with shopping assisted by a volunteer. Both must wear masks and use hand sanitizer.
- ◆ The Plentiful Table monthly meal for people in need may reopen.
- ◆ Space and academic support can be made available online learning for public school students whose parents cannot stay home with them; masks and social distancing will be maintained, and tables and chairs used sanitized after use.

### ADMINISTRATION

- ◆ Book groups, Bible studies, and prayer services remain primarily online.
- ◆ Meetings can be held in person, with masks worn and social distancing, and must also be held online for those who do not wish to come in-person.
- ◆ Offerings will be secured and counted once a week by trained counters. Counters must wear gloves and maintain a distance of 6 feet while counting the offering.

### PHASE IV – Date TBD

#### Return to in-person worship, fellowship and outreach

A vaccine has been developed and is available to all in the general public; treatment of proven effectiveness is widely available; testing is widespread for virus and immunity.

Continue constrictive practices for singing and eucharist as mandated

Continue assessment of pandemic and monitor state and CDC guidelines

### SPIRITUAL LIFE

- ◆ In-person services are held without restrictions on of worshipers who may attend, except that those who are known to be infectious, actively sick or who display any of the symptoms of being ill should not attend
- ◆ The main Sunday service will also be live-streamed and on Zoom.
- ◆ Wearing of masks through the service is encouraged but not required.
- ◆ A “touchless” passing of the peace is reintroduced.
- ◆ Holy Eucharist can be received in both kinds, at the altar rail.

- ◆ Vocal music can be provided with singers at a safe distance; congregational singing is undertaken with care.
- ◆ Coffee hours and parish events can return.

## **BUILDINGS**

- ◆ Church buildings are open on a regular basis with no restrictions on numbers (beyond fire safety)
- ◆ All rental groups can come back, signing agreements to maintain safe practices and sanitize spaces used. (*Appendix C*)
- ◆ 12-step meetings may reconvene inside the buildings. Group leaders will be required to sign a covenant (*Appendix C*) with Christ Church acknowledging receipt and agreement with these parameters.

## **OUTREACH/MISSION**

- ◆ The Food Pantry in La Plata reverts to previous protocols, allowing clients into the space with shopping assisted by a volunteer. Masks are encouraged??
- ◆ The Plentiful Table monthly meal for people in need reopens.

## APPENDIX A: CLEANING PROTOCOLS/STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

For the safety of the sanitizing team, and to ensure no contamination before people gather, cleaning of worship spaces will be completed 24 hours before services; anyone using the church between services will wipe door handles, light switches and surfaces affected after use.

### 1. Sanctuaries

- a. Cleaners will wear a mask and disposable gloves while cleaning and disinfecting. These will also be worn when disposing of trash
- b. Cleaners will use check-lists to ensure all tasks are completed
- c. All cleaning supplies will be in a labeled basket
- d. Doorknobs, inside and out, light switches, handles will be cleaned with anti-bacterial wipes. If wipes are not available, a solution of water/bleach or solution of a product like Mr. Clean, Spic and Span or Pine Sol can be used, with paper towels which will be disposed of.
- e. On pews (back top rail, and seat) we will use a solution of Murphy's Oil Soap or Mr. Clean. Bleach-based products and cleaning wipes should not be used on finished wood.
- f. Trash will be disposed of and the church closed until worship the next day.
- g. Tech crew will be responsible for cleaning microphones and computers.
- h. Stop-the-Spread signs will be posted at main entrances and in restrooms.

### 2. Restrooms

- a. Restrooms will be thoroughly cleaned – toilet seats, faucet and toilet, stall doors, and all door handles, with wipes, a bleach solution or ones mentioned in #1c.
- b. A basket of cleaning materials will be placed in each restroom.
- c. Signs instructing users to wipe down handles and toilet seat prior to use, and the importance of closing the toilet seat lid before flushing, will be posted in all restrooms.
- d. Lidless toilet seats will be replaced by ones that can be closed.
- e. Touchless soap dispensers will be installed in all restrooms.

### 3. Parish Halls

- a. **We do not anticipate parish gatherings in either Parish Hall until at least 2021.**
- b. The La Plata parish hall is used by the Potomac Early Learning Center and is sanitized according to state regulations governing nursery schools.
- c. 12-step groups must sign a covenant promising to wipe down all surfaces used with anti-bacterial products, sanitize and stow chairs, and leave "sanitized" signs on tables. They are not to use the kitchen.

### 4. Offices and Meeting Rooms

- a. Offices are to be used only by the one person assigned to them, who will be responsible for keeping any common areas (tables, copiers) sanitized.

## **APPENDIX B: PROTOCOLS AND CHECK LIST FOR GREETERS**

- Before worship, sanctuary doors are to be propped open if possible.
- All entry doorknobs, restroom doorknobs and light switches disinfected  
*(should have been done by cleaning team)*
- Door handles disinfected repeatedly and consistently after touch
- Touchless Hand sanitizer dispenser is prominent and accessible
- Check people off pre-registration list and add name, phone and email where needed.
- Ask people to sign Covenant for Regathering if they have not done so.
- No open seating. Guide people to marked available seats, keeping in mind size of household
- Keep track of number of participants to ensure maximum capacity not violated
- Wait list... taking names for next week, asking people to wait
- Ask people displaying symptomatic behavior to leave
- Ensure people take everything with them when they leave, especially any paper or wipes they brought in
- Door handles and other contact surfaces cleaned and disinfected after service.

### **APPENDIX C: COVENANT FOR OUTSIDE GROUPS USING CHURCH SPACE**

***To guide the use of indoor space should the Vestries approved that when local infection rates have dropped significantly, but before a vaccine has been developed***

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, \_\_\_\_\_ promises to abide by the Christ Church La Plata/Wayside Covenant for Use, and the COVID-19 Cleaning Standard Operating Procedure as follows:

***For the safety of self and others***

- ◆ Participants will wear a mask or scarf over nose and mouth while in the church building;
- ◆ Speakers will use a sound system to avoid speaking loudly, and will sanitize the microphone.
- ◆ Members will only attend the meeting if healthy and non-symptomatic of symptoms related to the novel coronavirus or any other transmittable disease that could compromise the health of another attendee.
- ◆ After *every meeting* designated group members will follow all sanitizing procedures posted, using the checklist provided.

***Respect the dignity of every human being***

- ◆ Participants will make no physical contact with anyone unless a member of his/her household.
- ◆ Maintain a distance of six feet or more from others.
- ◆ Respect any requests for distancing, masking, and/ or cleaning, to ensure the safety and comfort level of others, even as restrictions are reduced.

***Stay connected***

- ◆ Trust and support the decisions of Christ Church leaders.
- ◆ Stay connected with the church for any changes that may affect using the church building.

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**Group Leader Signature**

**Date**

**This Covenant must be signed and returned to the Parish Office  
by leaders of the Group.**

**CHECKLIST FOR SANITIZING SPACES USED BY  
ALL GROUPS OPERATING IN CHRIST CHURCH SPACES**

This Check list must be signed, dated, and returned to the clip board located in the Kitchen.  
Cleaning supplies will be available and labeled.

**List of touch surfaces to be disinfected after all gatherings:**

- Door to any restroom used
- Light switches in restrooms used
- Faucet handles in restroom used
- Stall doors, toilet seats and toilet handles in restroom used
- Tabletops (leave "sanitized" signs on tables)
- Chairs sanitized and stowed on racks
- Any other touch points noted during meeting
- Light switch(es) for parish hall
- Interior door to parish hall
- Entry Light switches
- Entrance door handles (outside and inside)
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Name (printed): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX D:  
POTOMAC EARLY LEARNING CENTER PROTOCOLS AND SANITIZING SOP**

*Provided in Attachment*