

Welcome Back to St. Stephen's



**INFORMATION FOR A SAFE
RETURN TO WORSHIP**

My dear friends in Christ,

I cannot begin to tell you how happy I will be to see many of you when we return to public worship. This separation from each other has been hard and has lasted longer than most of us ever expected. As much as I look forward to being able to worship God together with you, we want you to be aware that many things about how we worship will look and feel different when we come back together. This booklet is designed, to the best of our ability, to give you a foretaste of what worship at St. Stephen's will look and feel like.

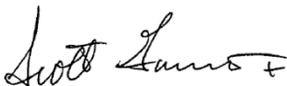
The main take away we hope you get from this booklet is that we have thought through our reopening and are doing everything we can to give a reasonable assurance of your safety. We should all realize that no one can guarantee with 100% confidence that you will not contract COVID-19. We are always taking a calculated risk when we leave our homes. That does not, however, mean that we should be fearful of coming to church. The Lord has blessed us with the ability to protect ourselves, especially when we work together and understand that our sacrifices may help save someone else's life – doesn't that sound similar to something Jesus would ask of us?

We also understand that some of our dear brothers and sisters may, for whatever reason, decide that now is not the appropriate time for them to return. We respect that decision and will continue to support you in your spiritual life. Our livestream service will continue indefinitely during the 10:30 service. Whether we worship together in person or continue to worship at home, we are still one family – St. Stephen's.

Our worship may look different for a while, but this time may allow us to ask once again what is worship? There is an old Matt Redman song that contains the lyric, "When the music fades and all is stripped away, and I simply come, longing just to bring something that's of worth...". May this time when worship is different from what we normally expect give us the space to examine how we use worship to guide us in the giving of ourselves to the one who gives us everything.

As always, may everything we do and say be the glory of God and the building of his kingdom. AMEN!

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott Lamm" with a small flourish at the end.

On Arriving at Church

Access to the Church Building & Service Times



There will be two services; HE Rite I at 8 a.m. & HE Rite II at 10:30 a.m.

The church building will open 20 minutes before each service and close 15 minutes after each service.

You are encouraged to enter and exit through the main entrance on Elsmere Avenue.

You will be asked to sign-in on entry.

Pre & post service foot traffic patterns designed to avoid possible congestion will be clearly marked. See diagram on page 7.

Respiratory Hygiene Supplies & Restrooms



At each entrance hand sanitizer, masks, and other hygiene supplies will be available. Please make use of the hand sanitizer on entry.

According to NY State & Diocese of Albany guidelines, **masks must be worn throughout the entire service.**

Children aged 4 and over must wear a mask.

Sanitize your hands before putting on your mask and/or helping children with theirs.

Restroom use is limited to one person at a time. The doors to the restrooms will be propped open unless they are occupied.

Seating & Literature



All printed materials have been removed from the pews. Bulletins will be emailed and can be printed at home. A limited number of pre-printed copies (1-2 per family group) will be available. You may wish to “adopt” a BCP and bring it with you each week.

Ushers will seat you for the first couple of weeks following color-coded seating plans and social distancing mandates.

Seating will be in every other pew, color-coded by service time. “Green” pews at 8 a.m. and non-colored pews at 10:30 a.m. See diagram on page 8.

During the Service

You will notice some changes:

- The Procession will be from the side door only
- Kneeling is discouraged due to the need to touch multiple areas in the pew
- There will be no congregational singing
- Members of the choir will sing chosen verses of hymns
- The sermon will be preached from the pulpit
- A pew on the pulpit side of the sanctuary has been removed to allow space for equipment necessary to continue livestream broadcasts

Offertory & Peace



The Peace will be offered verbally with no physical contact of any sort.

Offering plates will be left at the back of the church. Please consider giving online as an alternative. [Tithe.ly](https://tithe.ly) can be accessed securely via our website.

Holy Communion



The Celebrant will wear a facemask during the distribution of the host. The Elements will be kept covered and safe.

The Celebrant will administer the sacrament at the head of the aisle.

Please sanitize your hands before receiving.

Both you and the Celebrant will extend arms to approximate social distancing.



The host will not be placed directly into the mouth to avoid possible contamination. To consume the host, step to the side, partially remove your mask, self-administer the host, then replace your mask.

Blessings will be conferred without physical contact.

Please feel comfortable should you make the decision to not receive communion. Our clergy is supportive of this choice.

Instructions will be given on how to come up for Communion.

Dismissal & Leaving

Please take all printed materials home with you or place them in the recycling bin at the back of the church. Any and all personal items must be cleaned out of the pews by those sitting in them.

Working every other pew, exit the sanctuary in an orderly fashion, maintaining 6 feet of distance from others at all times.

The clergy will not line up to greet but will be available for consultation.

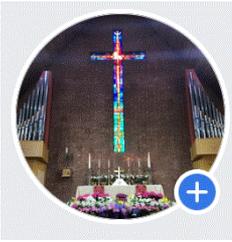
Weather permitting, this will be done outside. Masks should be worn and social distancing rules should be followed.

Until further notice there will be no breakfast or coffee hour. Please do not congregate in the parish hall or other areas of the church. Virtual Coffee Hour will continue.

Pews will be cleaned between services.

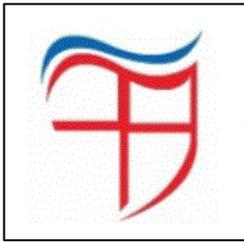
Additional Information

Livestreamed Services



We will continue to broadcast our Sunday services and services of Morning Prayer on our Facebook page. If you are not quite ready to return to church, please continue to worship with us virtually.

Groups & Studies



At this time, in-person Sunday School, Choir, Bible studies, ministry meetings, Youth Group, & fellowship activities – breakfast & coffee hour – are on hold.

We will continue to offer opportunities for study and fellowship online via ZOOM.

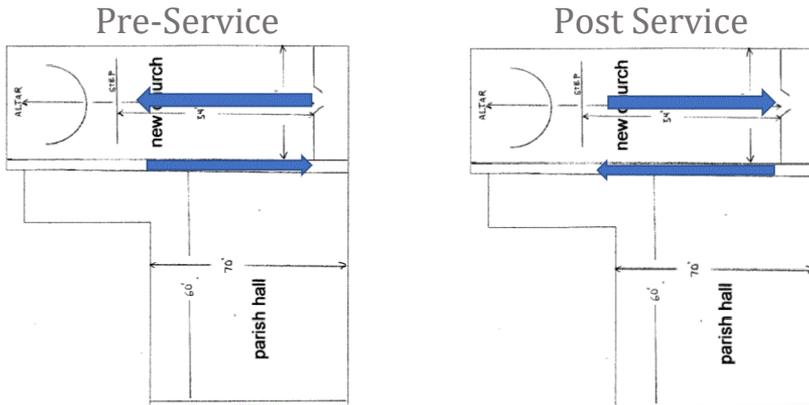
Staying Safe – When Not to Come to Church

In line with guidelines issued by the Diocese of Albany we ask that you do not attend church if you can answer ‘yes’ to any of the following:

1. Have a temperature of 100.4 or higher or chills
2. Have a cough, sore throat, or muscle aches
3. Have difficulty breathing or have shortness of breath

4. Lost your sense of taste or smell
5. You or someone in your household has tested positive for COVID 19
6. Have come into contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID 19

Foot Traffic Patterns



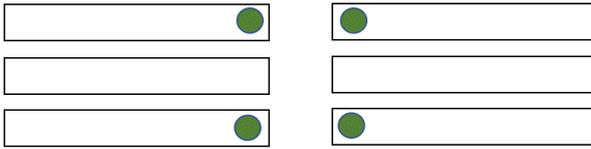
Two-way traffic will be permitted in the restroom hallway. The hallway by Godly Play and the sanctuary will be one-way. Pre-service flow will run counter-clockwise. During the service there will be no restrictions. Post-service traffic will run clockwise. Please follow social distance guidelines when walking in the hallways.

Pew Seating & Capacity

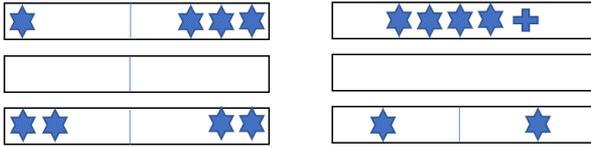
Every other pew will be used. Pews will be color-coded according to service time: “green” pews at 8 a.m. and non-colored pews at 10:30 a.m. Seating will be at the edge of each pew unless directed by an usher. Households of four or more will accommodate an entire pew. An illustrative diagram is on pg. 8.

Pews will be cleaned between surfaces. Waste and recycling receptacles will be lined with disposable liners and emptied frequently.

Color coded pews



Pew Capacity Diagram



Questions or Concerns

We want to make our return to public worship as safe, easy, and comfortable as possible. Diocesan guidelines, based primarily on CDC recommendations and government mandated regulations, form the foundation of our reintroduction plan. The Diocesan Guidelines can be found online at: www.albanyepiscopaldiocese.org

If you have any questions, concerns, or require clarification on any of the points detailed in this booklet, or would like a copy of our formal plan, please contact us.

Contact Us

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Email: ststephensdelmar@gmail.com

Web: www.ststephensdelmar.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/St-Stephens-Episcopal-Church-Delmar-New-York-107734205935682/

ZOOM Sunday Worship & Virtual Coffee Hour

<https://zoom.us/j/891939928?pwd=dFRlUjIzaEJjOXIzRXBETHB1TVg2UT09>
ID: 891939928

Password: 12054