

The Parish of Christ the Redeemer
Re-Opening of the Church Buildings
Notes and Guidelines – June 24th, 2020

We are pleased to report to the parish that we will shortly begin to re-open the church building for worship and prayer.

Over the course of the last four weeks, a group of parishioners (including medical professionals and lawyers) have been reviewing

- a) the latest medical advice on CoVID19,
- b) the requirements of the Diocese of New York and New York State and
- c) reaching out to other houses of worship to find out what they are doing.

We have carried out a detailed examination of our church building and premises to see how we can use them in conformity with the rules. Please note that after a “trial seating” of 20 people, it is clear that the church will not hold many more than this amount due to the need for two out of every three pews to be empty to meet the social distancing requirements.

As the pandemic is an evolving situation we expect that these rules and policies will change over time – we will update you as that occurs.

Re-opening

The church sanctuary will re-open on Wednesday, July 1st for private prayer from 4:00pm-6:00pm. After July 1st the church sanctuary will be open on Sunday mornings from 9:00am until 11:00am beginning July 5th. If you would like the opportunity for private prayer in the church beyond July 1st or Sunday mornings, please contact the parish office to make an appointment.

On Sunday mornings in July at 9:00am and again at 10:00am we will offer a screening of the pre-recorded YouTube worship for that week, played inside the church on the two large screens that were purchased for the organ concert. The YouTube worship shown in the church each Sunday will be the exact same YouTube service that is available online. The only difference will be the venue and the people gathered.

The parish office will be overseeing a “reservations” plan for the month of July in order to accommodate as many individuals, couples and families as possible. More information on that is below.

Holy Communion will not be offered in the church during the month of July, but we are hopeful that Communion in the church can be reintroduced at some point in August/September. If you would like to receive Communion from the Reserved Sacrament, please contact Fr. Matt.

Pre-Recorded YouTube Worship / Live Worship

We are offering pre-recorded worship services in the church for numerous reasons, primarily:

- We have significant attendance restrictions (about 25-30 people max including clergy, musicians, and ushers) on the number of people allowed in the church at any time.
- We know that many parishioners are not yet ready to come back to church due to health concerns, and we do not want to offer two different worship services for those who are worshipping in church and those who are worshipping at home.
- Everyone (over age 2) without exception must remain masked for the entire service.

What to expect if you come to church on a Sunday in July & August

Our buildings have been closed to the public for several months. Reopening them requires following specific steps and guidelines so when you first enter the church several things may be different.

- **Hosts:** Upon arrival at the church, parishioners will be greeted at the Narthex (at a socially appropriate distance) by a “host” who will be wearing a red sash. At this point in time, we will be utilizing hosts who have been on the task force, but we are eager to return to our regular usher rota and schedule in the coming months.
- **Contact Tracing:** Hosts will be responsible for making sure the names of attendees are listed in case future contact tracing is needed and enforcing the rules for entering the church.
- **Health check:** Attendees will be directed to read the medical signs that will be posted and confirm that they have not experienced any of the symptoms listed.
- **Masks:** Everyone (over age 2) **MUST** wear a mask covering **BOTH** the nose and mouth at all times. Attendees are expected to bring their own masks.
- **Hand sanitizer:** Hand sanitizer **MUST** be applied by everyone prior to entering the sanctuary. Gloves are not recommended by our medical professionals but if you insist on wearing them, the gloves must also be sanitized.
- **No touching:** As far as possible, please refrain from touching objects in the church. The church will be cleaned after each service.
- **No singing:** Please refrain from singing while you are in the church.
- **Seating:** Hosts direct the seating of all attendees. Family groups may sit together but otherwise attendees will be seated in such a way as to remain six feet apart. Once seated by the host each attendee will remain in that spot until the end of the service or unless asked to move by the host.
- **Social Distancing Inside & Outside:** Attendees (from differing family groups) must make every effort to remain six feet apart at all times while seated, while moving anywhere inside the church, and anywhere on the church property – including outside.
- **Noncompliance:** If an attendee is unable or unwilling to abide by these restrictions they will be asked to leave.

Other things you may notice when returning to church:

- All prayer books and hymnals have been removed from the sanctuary. When services beyond YouTube resume, single use service leaflets will be provided.
- The floors have been marked and traffic patterns have been indicated by floor markers.
- Two standing hand sanitizer dispensers will be positioned at the entrance so attendees can wash their hands
- Two out of every three pews have been closed in order to maintain social distancing.
- During the Peace we will wave to each other rather than hug or shake hands.
- Please enter as you always have, through the narthex. We will be exiting the church through the bell tower door.
- Please note that for the time being, bathrooms and public areas of the parish are off limits, except in the case of emergencies.
- There will be no coffee hour following services until further notice.
- After each service all “high touch” objects will be cleaned.
- Holy Communion will not be offered in the church during the month of July, but we are hopeful that Communion in the church can be reintroduced at some point in August/September. If you would like to receive Communion from the Reserved Sacrament, please contact Fr. Matt.

Reservation Plan

The parish office will be overseeing a “reservations” plan for the month of July in order to accommodate as many individuals, couples, and families as possible. Due to our space limitations we ask that you contact the parish office (marie@christchurchpelham.org) 914-738-5515 and reserve your place (and the number in your party) for ONE screening (9am or 10am) in July. Pick a Sunday that you know works for you. Reservations for each Sunday and timeslot will be on a first come / first served basis. Please arrive ten minutes before the service. If you are not present five minutes before the service begins, your reservation may be forfeited. Please know that we would prefer not to have a reservation system, but we felt it was better than sending people away at the door.

Outdoor Worship

The Garden of the Resurrection is and has been open for prayer. At this time there are no services scheduled for outdoors, though we are looking into using our Garden of the Resurrection beginning in August for occasional, in-person worship. You will note that we have set up red, social distance, markers in the Garden for when we do offer in person worship. The primary reason for not doing outdoor services at this time is due to space/attendance limitations.

Other Indoor Spaces

We are continuing to evaluate how the rest of the church premises can be used, but for the time being they are closed for all purposes. This includes use of the bathrooms except in the case of emergencies.

Health check tool before attending church

Before coming to church you should review this health check tool to see if it applies to you. This will also be displayed at the entrance and you will be asked to confirm to the host that none of these symptoms apply to you. If you answer YES to any of the below, then you should **NOT** attend church in person with other parishioners (but instead consult your physician).

In the last 24hrs, have you had any of the following:

- Chills
- Muscle aches
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Shortness of breath
- Fever >100 F
- NEW onset loss of sense of smell OR taste
- Unexplained headache

If you **have had** documented CoVID19, or an illness consistent with CoVID19, you should not attend church in person until ALL of the following criteria have been met:

- At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed *since recovery*, defined as **both**
 - resolution of fever, without the use of fever-reducing medications (Tylenol, aspirin, aspirin-like meds),
and
 - improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath);
- **In addition**, at least 10 days must have passed *since symptoms first appeared*.

Our goal was to evaluate the worship and program spaces in order to open the church to our many parishioners in the safest way possible.

Expectations & Feedback

We recognize that our plan may not be what everyone hoped for when it was announced that the church would reopen. Please know that our plan is designed to gradually resume some of our normal church activities in the safest way possible. Reopening the church for prayer and as a gathering place to watch our pre-recorded services is a starting point. As we learn more and we are allowed by the diocese and the state to do more, we hope to increase our offerings.

Your feedback is essential to helping us navigate the next steps of reopening. Please be patient as we are doing the best we can with an unprecedented situation. If you have any questions or concerns please contact Gavin Leckie, who can be reached at gfleckie@aol.com or on his cellphone at 914 539 0270.

June 24th, 2020