

## RETURNING TO CHURCH - PHASE TWO

**STARTING DATE:** Immediately Upon Approval by Administrative Council



On June 4, 2020, Trinity’s Administrative Council approved a “Phase One” Returning-to-Church plan. The purpose of this “Phase Two” plan is to transition many aspects of congregational life from Phase One toward a new normal during the summer of 2020. Most centrally, as noted below, this plan focuses on Worship. This Phase Two plan, however, also addresses: Church School and Bible Studies; Outreach, Evangelism and Missions; Church Business; General Building Concerns; and Publicity and Communications.

### I. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The shift to Phase Two is based on a re-evaluation of the criteria of Phase One. Availability for COVID-19 testing may be a part of the factors affecting portions of this phase. We will also expect several weeks of improving conditions, including the flattening of the COVID-19 curve in our community, before implementing certain aspects below. In particular, Phase Two will require us to adhere to our Phase One guidelines, and to keep the following additional principles in mind:

- We will conform with the Massachusetts Safety Standards for Places of Worship, or then-existing equivalent.
- With limited exceptions, we presently intend take the temperature of people coming into the building.
- With limited exceptions, we presently intend to request people coming into the building to answer a health questionnaire\*

**\*Sample Health Questionnaire (provided by Sara Mckeown)**

**Are you experiencing any of the following?**

1. Fever or feeling feverish
2. Sore throat
3. New cough (not related to a chronic condition)
4. New nasal congestion or new runny nose (not related to seasonal allergies)
5. Muscle aches
6. New loss of smell (or taste)
7. Shortness of breath

- Perhaps most importantly, we intend this plan, which is subject to change, to provide the pastors and other church leadership—with appropriate oversight by the Administrative Council—flexibility in both running the business of the church and providing meaningful and safe worship and other church experiences during the summer of 2020.

**Approved by Administrative Council: June 18, 2020**

## II. WORSHIP

During the summer of 2020, it is intended that many or all of the following worship options will be implemented. In light of the principles of this Phase Two plan, these options may be simultaneous, graduating, or alternating, and all are subject to change. The main goal, however, is to move toward a version of an indoor formal Sunday worship experience sometime in August of 2020 and beyond. (Please see Appendix A for an outline of additional data undergirding the various worship options.)

1. Recorded Worship Services: *For the foreseeable future*, we intend to continue recording worship services, with added features of a virtual zoom community. The pastors, in conjunction with other worship leaders, will be given discretion when to include recorded and/or virtual worship experiences with the below “live” worship experiences in order to provide significant content for those choosing not to attend in person.
2. Informal Outdoor Evening Worship Services: *Between now and the middle of July*, we intend to implement at least one (if not multiple) outdoor evening worship service(s) to be held during the week with limited music options, no live streaming, and no congregational singing. The pastors, in conjunction with other worship leaders, will be given discretion to implement such service(s) in light of the principles of this Phase Two plan and the mission of the church.
3. Formal Outdoor Sunday Worship Services: *Between now and the end of July*, we intend to implement at least one (if not multiple) formal outdoor Sunday worship service(s). Location options for such service(s) may include the front lawn, the parking lot, or the rear of the building. It is intended that there will be potential live streaming, no congregational singing, but a repertoire of various singers and musicians. The pastors, in conjunction with other worship leaders, will be given discretion to implement such service(s) in light of the principles of this Phase Two plan and the mission of the church.
4. Formal Indoor Sunday Worship Services: *Starting in August*, we intend to hold at least one (if not multiple) formal indoor Sunday worship service(s). Location options for such service(s) may include the sanctuary or Asbury Hall, with mindfulness placed on a limited space capacity. It is intended that there will be potential live streaming, no congregational singing, but a repertoire of various singers and musicians. The pastors, in conjunction with other worship leaders, will be given discretion to implement such service(s) in light of the principles of this Phase Two plan and the mission of the church.

### **General recommendations for worship:**

- Live streaming or pre-recording should be a part of what we do, as there will be many who are at high risk and cannot join us, or may not feel safe to return even if precautions are in place.
- When we offer communion, we will provide individual cups and gluten-free wafers.
- We will place a plate/box at the entrances/exits for people to deposit their offering as they come in or leave.

**Approved by Administrative Council: June 18, 2020**

- Signage and Social Distance:
  - Floors will be clearly marked with directional and social distancing signs. There will be other visible directional signs. If necessary, we will have one-way aisles in the sanctuary. Some doors will be entrances and others exits.
  - A two-pew distance in between attendees will be created and/or there will be at least six-feet of distance for individuals seated on the same pew.
  - There will be no fist or elbow bumping. Passing of the peace can be a hand wave.
- Safety:
  - Wearing masks will be required for indoor and outdoor worship. If people do not bring masks with them, we will have masks for them.
  - There will not be congregational singing to prevent spreading the virus. Droplets/aerosols can carry it a significant distance and remain suspended in the air. Later on, we can consider the feasibility of other singing options.
  - Bibles and hymnals have been removed. Words for hymns and Scriptures will be printed in a one-sheet (non-recyclable) bulletin. We will not reuse bulletins.
  - We will not have fellowship/coffee hour. Instead, we will encourage people to leave the premises rather than mingling.
  - We have removed all soft furniture.
- Life rituals (weddings, funerals, confirmations) could take place in a more traditional way, with careful attention to guest lists, so as to keep under the current fifty-person limit, and physical distancing plans. We will be conducting graveside services.

### **III. OTHER CHURCH FUNCTIONS AND BUSINESS**

#### **➤ Church School and Bible Studies:**

- Bible studies and Church school can continue to meet online. As stated in Phase 1, groups of less than 10 may consider meeting in person, while following all guidelines.
- Vacation Bible Camp will consist of virtual and at-home options as well as two optional activities for individual families to do outside the church on their own time.

#### **➤ Outreach, Evangelism and Missions:**

- The Mobile Food Bank will continue as designed and approved by the Ad Council.
- The Carillon concert series (both indoor and outdoor) have been canceled.
- We will hold off on making a decision about Trinity Sunday's Block Party, until the next Ad Council meeting.
- We do not need to make a decision regarding the BHF until the fall. There will continue to be coordination between the BHF executive committee and the Ad Council.

**Approved by Administrative Council: June 18, 2020**

➤ **Church Business**

- Regular office functions will resume safely, under the supervision of the Staff Parish Relations Committee, while maintaining social distancing and wearing masks.
- We will continue to attend to cleaning and sanitizing the office areas, paying particular attention to high-touch surfaces and sanitizing hands after.
- Church committees, including the Administrative Council and other meetings involving less than ten individuals, might consider meeting in person while wearing masks and maintaining social distancing, or continue meeting online.
- Tenants and other approved building users are specifically addressed in the Phase One plan. As noted therein, such groups have the option of resuming operations, under certain conditions approved by the Administrative Council.

➤ **General Building Concerns:**

- We intend to post signs indicating symptoms and urging people to stay home/seek medical attention if they have symptoms.
- We intend to maintain a good stock of tissue, soap, hand sanitizer and disposable paper towels for drying hands. Similarly, we intend to clean the building regularly and between user groups, paying extra attention to high-touch surfaces. To that end:
  - We are attempting, as feasible, to overstock supplies. We presently intend to have masks, gloves (for worship participants), hand sanitizer, wipes, trash cans or buckets nearby for immediate wipe disposal.
  - We intend to have hand sanitizer stations at entrances and to purchase multiple hand-held no-contact thermometers (at approximately \$120 per unit).
  - We intend to schedule groups so that rooms are cleared for at least thirty minutes or longer to allow for no-contact and cleaning.
  - We intend to prohibit drop-in traffic around the offices, and to enforce visits by appointments only (especially Jewish Family Services). We may need volunteers available to ensure authorized building users go directly to their designated classroom or office to prevent wandering throughout the church.
- If we become aware of a building user infected with COVID-19, we will put a communication plan into action, and cooperate fully with contact tracers.

➤ **Publicity & Communications**

- In addition to regular publicity and communications, we intend to send out press releases to news organizations/radio stations (perhaps a newspaper ad) when we schedule our first full celebratory on-site worship service. Possibilities include a newspaper ad, social media, website, front lawn signage, email blast, and/or robo-call.

## Appendix A

Worship Options	Why do you think this is important?	What are the benefits	What are your concerns	Needed steps and conversations
<b>Recorded services with added virtual community</b> (via Zoom, YouTube premiere, etc.)	To capture some of the traditional elements and normalcy that we miss To invite worship without additional risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Real time. Safe.</li> <li>- Enables people with health concerns to participate without worry</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Limited face-to-face connection.</li> <li>- Difficult for people without internet access. - -</li> <li>- Technical issues can be a disruptions</li> </ul>	How can we help those without access feel connected? How do we create a virtual community?
<b>Informal Outdoor Evening Worship during the week.</b> (masks, social distancing, no congregational singing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- because gathering as a community of faith is an important part of being a church</li> <li>- because even if we cannot sing, we can still worship God together</li> <li>- because people want to see each other even if we are feet apart</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Face to face connection.</li> <li>- No live streaming</li> <li>- New music options</li> <li>- At Trinity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Limited music options.</li> <li>- No congregational singing</li> <li>- Traffic noise</li> <li>- People won't respect distance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sound equipment</li> <li>- we will need to train ushers</li> <li>- how and why we distance ourselves (and respect people's personal space of 6 ft or more)</li> <li>-disinfecting practices</li> </ul>
<b>Outdoor Worship on Sunday - live streamed</b> (masks, social distancing, no congregational singing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- because gathering as a community of faith is an important part of being a church</li> <li>- because even if we cannot sing, we can still worship God together</li> <li>- because people want to see each other even if we are feet apart</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Face to face connection.</li> <li>- Live streaming</li> <li>- new music options</li> <li>- at Trinity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Limited music options.</li> <li>- No congregational singing</li> <li>- Traffic noise on Summer</li> <li>- Drop in worship video quality</li> <li>- Potential technical difficulties with live stream</li> <li>- Drop in online viewership</li> <li>- Weather is a big factor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sound and video equipment</li> <li>- how to livestream</li> <li>- we will need to train ushers</li> <li>- how and why we distance ourselves (and respect people's personal space of 6 ft or more)</li> <li>-disinfecting practices</li> <li>- what about those who don't feel comfortable gathering (or really shouldn't because of health concerns)</li> <li>-Might need to coordinate with the other churches who share the building</li> </ul>
<b>Indoor Worship on Sunday - live streamed.</b> (masks, social distancing, no	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- because gathering as a community of faith is an important part of being a church</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Face to face connection.</li> <li>-Shared experience in real time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No congregational singing</li> <li>- No hugging, no passing of the peace, no coffee hour</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- sounds and video equipment</li> </ul>

<p>congregational singing)</p>	<p>- because people are missing a sense of normalcy in their lives which the church could provide</p>	<p>-Inside Trinity - a space that means a lot to so many people          - Live streaming – people who cannot be present, can still watch</p>	<p>-Either have to strictly enforce masks, distancing, and sanitizing, which poses a challenge to friendly and welcoming church community or are more lax and ostracize those who are taking distancing seriously (and potentially increase spread)          -Greater likelihood of spread          -Cost of cleaning supplies          -Potential technical difficulties with livestream</p>	<p>- who will record the worship services and upload them?          -how to livestream          - we will need to train ushers          - how and why we distance ourselves (and respect people’s personal space of 6 ft or more)          -disinfecting practices          -if it’s not working out (there’s a surge or concern, etc.), can we go back to pre-recorded?</p>