



COVID-19 RE-ENTRY PROCEDURES: PHASE II

St. Mary's In-The-Hills Episcopal Church

Lake Orion, Michigan

July 2020; revised March 2021

OUR FOCUS:

When asked what the greatest commandment from God was, Jesus said, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the greatest and first commandment. And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." This teaching has guided our deliberations throughout this pandemic about how we ought to worship and fellowship together, what the shape of our common life ought to look like. In order to best fulfill these commandments at the present time, we remain committed to worshiping faithfully primarily online, but also offering a few in-person opportunities to gather while observing extra precautions to care for one another.

1. GENERAL

· **STAY CONNECTED!**: The best way to stay in touch with all that is going on at St. Mary's and to keep up with the latest updates on our life together and our worship service, is to [subscribe](#) to our email list (usually 1-2 emails per week). Our [Facebook page](#) is another great way to keep up with all that is going on, and to get timely reports on the status of our worship services.

· **WEBSITE and ONLINE SERVICES**: Throughout Phase II of the diocese's reopening plan, our worship service will be livestreamed on Sunday mornings on our [YouTube page](#), with links on our website and on our Facebook page.

To watch through our website, open our page at <http://www.stmarysinthehills.org>, scroll down to the LATEST WORSHIP SERVICE heading, and click on the link. As we are able we continue to add other useful and inspiring content.

2. BUILDING & FACILITY ADJUSTMENTS

· **DISINFECTION**: The church building is regularly cleaned and disinfected. We will continue to clean and disinfect the building thoroughly, as necessary, between any user groups.

· **SANITIZING STATIONS**: Hand Sanitizing Stations have been placed at the entrances to the church and will be available at the entrance/exit of the outdoor Chapel. Please use them regularly.

- **BATHROOMS:** Bathrooms will be made available as needed, and will be limited to a capacity of two people at a time. Please maintain social distance in the restrooms.
- **DOORS PROPPED OPEN:** When the church building is in use, facility doors will be propped open throughout the church. Please keep the inside doors propped open at all times. Outside doors should remain propped while building is in use.
- **OPEN WINDOWS:** Our office windows will be open when occupied to bring in fresh air, and during worship services we will open the sanctuary windows and turn on the overhead fans to ensure adequate ventilation.
- **OFFICE USE:** Fr. Andy, Vestry members, and church staff will be able to utilize the office, but are encouraged to continue working from home insofar as is possible. Our in-office functions will be as minimal as possible, ensuring only essential operations. While in the office, all staff members will maintain six feet of separation, regular handwashing, and regular disinfection of common surfaces.

3. IN-PERSON WORSHIP

In Phase II, the outdoor Chapel will serve as our primary place of worship. We plan to move services indoors if weather conditions so warrant, with limited capacity. Additionally, we will continue to provide a livestream of our services.

Here is a summary of the general precautions we will be taking at these in-person services:

- If you are feeling ill in any way, or are especially vulnerable to communicable disease, please worship with our online service.
- All in attendance will be required to keep a distance of six feet, 360-degrees, between family units, at all times.
- Cars should park, insofar as is possible, with space between, to ensure appropriate social distancing while arriving and departing.
- All in attendance must wear a mask while entering and exiting the Boy Scout Chapel or church building, and throughout the service. We will have extra masks on hand.
- While there will be some seating available on the outdoor benches during our outdoor services, those in attendance are encouraged to bring their own lawn chairs.
- Restrooms will be available as needed, Otherwise, we will refrain from utilizing the rest of the building, except as overflow seating, at this time.
- All precautions should be followed regardless of current vaccination status.

Here is additional detail about procedures we will be enacting and precautions we will be taking:

- **LOCATION:** As of now, our services will be held in the outdoor Chapel, weather permitting. As a contingency, we will move into the sanctuary, with limited capacity.
- **MAXIMUM CAPACITY:** There is no requirement to pre-register to attend in-person worship at this time. When we must gather in the church building, the diocesan guidelines allow 25% capacity in services. For us, this means our maximum capacity is 57 in the main sanctuary, as long as we can appropriately distance, and dependent on the size of family units. The Hamm Room, which is a separate room adjacent to the back of the sanctuary, will be prepared for

socially distanced family units should additional space be needed. If our Easter service were indoors and required additional socially distanced seating, we will have the Fellowship Hall available with a livestream on a large screen. In the outdoor chapel, we can accommodate as many as are able to fit while keeping a six-foot, 360-degree distance between family units.

· **CONTACT TRACING:** We will ask that everyone attending a Sunday Service provide us with your email address or phone number so we can reach out to you if someone infectious attended a service. Should such a case arise, we will send a message to our entire parish list with instructions. Therefore, 1) Be sure we have your contact information; 2) Keep track of which dates you have been at St. Mary's; and 3) Notify the office if you are diagnosed with COVID-19 after attending a worship service.

· **SOCIAL DISTANCE:** While at church, everyone is asked to keep a physical distance of six feet or more from those who do not live with you. (This social distance rule is encouraged outside of church, too!)

· **MASKS:** For everyone's safety, face-coverings must be worn during all public services and while in public spaces. (Face-coverings are needed outside because of Diocesan policy and per CDC guidance, which requires that masks be worn outside when keeping social distance of six feet may be difficult, or while in formal public gatherings.)

· **SEATING:** Household units sit together observing a social distance of 6 feet or more between different households. Should we use the sanctuary, the pews have been taped to indicate available seating locations.

· **BRING YOUR OWN CHAIR:** For outside services, please consider bringing your own lawn chair. This reduces our need to move, clean, and stack our chairs.

· **BULLETINS:** Everything you need for worship will be found in our Order of Service. An usher who has sanitized their hands will be handing these out. Or you may take one from a table as you enter the worship space. Please take your Order of Service home with you (and feel free to use them for personal devotion throughout the week!).

· **SINGING:** We will not be singing during in-person services at this time. We look forward to re-introducing song into our services when public health guidelines allow.

· **THE PEACE:** When we have a passing of the peace, no-touch greetings are required. Please maintain your position and physical distance at this time.

· **OFFERINGS:** Offerings are necessary to help meet our ministry commitments, but offering plates will not be passed. Instead, please place your offering into the basket or plate as you enter the worship space. For your convenience you might consider setting up an auto-payment through your bank's website or setting-up an e-Gift offering through the Diocese website: <https://www.edomi.org/give/>

· **THE PRIEST:** Fr. Andy will wear a face-covering in the service except when he is twenty feet or more away from people and also officiating or preaching, and he may remain masked even then. If people are closer than 20 feet, he will wear the mask, especially during the distribution of Holy Communion (if there is Communion; see the next section).

· **WORSHIP LENGTH:** Longer times are more conducive to virus spread than shorter times. Therefore, we are making an effort to plan a service that will last not longer than 45 minutes. A

shorter service will have less music, fewer readings, a shorter sermon, fewer prayers. We will welcome your feedback about whether the length of these services is satisfying, or whether you would prefer more content.

- **COFFEE HOUR:** No coffee hour or fellowship time will be held after the service. Please do not congregate in the parking lot or the Fellowship Hall (once we are able to worship indoors).
- **WHEN WE WORSHIP INDOORS:** When our service is held in the Main Sanctuary, we will open the doors, activate fans, and open the windows. If we have more than one service, we will disinfect the pews and common surfaces between services, as well as allowing at least 30 minutes between services.

4. HOLY EUCHARIST and COMMUNION

We are offering communion at this time, in accordance with the following guidelines:

- **CELEBRATING HOLY EUCHARIST:** Should we decide it is safe to offer Communion, no acolytes or Eucharistic ministers will be employed. Fr. Andy will wash his hands before and after the Eucharistic Prayer. During the Eucharistic Prayer the people's wafers will be in a tightly covered container called a ciborium that is not open during the prayer.
- **RECEIVING HOLY COMMUNION:** Fr. Andy will distribute as family units come forward, with appropriate physical distance maintained between those units.
- **THE BREAD OF HOLY COMMUNION:** When we offer Communion, the people will receive the consecrated bread. The distribution of consecrated wine is not permitted due to the increased risk of contact and the risk of lifted masks in the presence of the Eucharistic Minister. Please note that reception of the bread is still reception of Christ – receiving only the bread has the same theological implications as receiving both the bread and the wine.
- **FORGOING HOLY COMMUNION:** As is always the case, any person may choose at any time not to receive the physical elements of Holy Communion. Cross your arms and Fr. Andy will give you a touchless blessing.

5. PASTORAL SERVICES

- **BAPTISM/WEDDINGS/FUNERALS:** We are here to provide services for your spiritual needs of all kinds. Please contact the office to schedule a Baptism, Memorial Service, or Wedding. At this time, we will need to keep such services small, but we can accommodate many important needs.

6. PRAYER MINISTRY and HOME VISITS

We are not currently offering Eucharistic Visitation, but when we are able, here are the procedures we will follow.

- **PRAYER and PASTORAL CONVERSATION:** Fr. Andy and our healing prayer ministers are happy to talk and or pray with you! Please contact Fr. Andy at andy@stmarysinthehills.org or on his mobile at (310) 750-4991, or you can contact our healing prayer ministers at prayers@stmarysinthehills.org.

· **VISITATION PROCESS:** When we are able to offer Communion, a Eucharistic Visitor (EV) from St. Mary's or Fr. Andy will be able to coordinate a time to visit. Visits will be short, preferably outside or on a porch. When we are able to offer Holy Communion, you will be asked to put a bowl outside your door, perhaps on a small table. While wearing a mask and with sanitized hands the EV will come to your house, place the consecrated bread into the bowl, knock on your door, and then step away 6' or more. When you open the door you can pick up the consecrated bread. The EV will greet you and guide you through brief prayers before and after you receive.

· **TO BECOME A EUCHARISTIC VISITOR** please be sure you are in good health and are comfortable with the process mentioned above. Then reach out to us in the office at office@stmarysinthehills.org or contact Fr. Andy.

7. CHILDREN/YOUTH PROGRAMS

· **OTHER PROGRAMS:** Our Bible Study, Pub Theology, Sunday School, and Youth programs will continue primarily by Zoom, but there may be some opportunity for in-person programs, following the guidelines above.

· **GOD MOMENTS:** Children learn a great deal about God in Christ from their parents, grandparents, family, and friends. Look for frequent opportunities to speak about your faith to your children. Teach your children to pay attention to "God Moments," when they felt Christ was truly present, whether in a caterpillar, a sunset, a joyous moment, or even in disappointing or difficult feelings.

· **MEETINGS:** Meetings are to be held by phone or Zoom whenever possible. Contact the office to get our Zoom credentials to hold your meeting.

9. IF YOU FEEL SICK

According to Mayo Clinic, common signs and symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, cough, and tiredness. Other symptoms can include shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, muscle aches, chills, sore throat, loss of taste or smell, headache, and chest pain. If you have any of these symptoms, please remain home and call your doctor. (And please do let us know so we can hold you in prayer!)

10. OTHER GROUPS

Other groups who use St. Mary's property, in particular, Boy Scout Troop 128 and the Love INC clothes distribution, will again be permitted use of the building, with the following restrictions:

- Indoor gatherings are restricted to no more than 25 people.
- Insofar as possible, activities should be conducted outside.
- Masks are required for all gatherings, both indoors and outdoors, and hand sanitizer should be made available to participants.
- At least 6 feet of distance, 360*, is required at all times between family units.
- A log must be maintained for all who enter the building in case of required contact tracing.
- Those experiencing symptoms of sickness are required to stay home and not participate.
- Groups are required to report any positive COVID cases to church leadership.

- Groups are required to appropriately clean and disinfect the areas of use.
- No food or beverages allowed as part of any gathering or meeting.

ANYTHING WE MISSED?

We're trying to make this document as complete as possible, but perhaps we haven't answered all your questions. Reach out to us and we'll make sure you get every detail you're looking for.

With all the bonds of our affection in Christ,

Fr. Andy and the Vestry of St. Mary's In-The-Hills