



Phase Approach to Re-gathering

Envisioning the move from
“Stay at Home” to Gathering



Responding to COVID-19 – Certainty vs. Clarity

- Since the pandemic's outset, we have grasped at certainty in believing there was one date in a few weeks when we could once again gather in-person
 - This type of certainty is not possible
- Clarity reveals a phase approach is warranted
 - We phased-in with large gatherings canceled, then under several hundred, then under 50, then under 10 then into *stay at home protocols*.
 - All major protocols (Johns Hopkins, CDC, Imperial College of London, WHO, and American Enterprise Institute) speak about a phase approach
 - Government, economic, and health leaders in dialogue about a phased approach



Phase Approach Overview

- Four phases that will likely last at least 12 – 18 months
- Churches may find local mitigation returns them to *stay at home* protocols
- We can expect future pandemic and crisis scenarios with local mitigation and phased public re-entry



Phase I: Stay at home – work safe

HEALTH CHARACTERISTICS

- Widespread community spread of the virus
- Overtaxed health system
- Short medical supply
- Lack of availability of vaccine, therapeutics, and counter measures
- Lack of protective supplies (e.g. gloves, masks, sanitizer) for general public



Phase I: Stay at home – work safe

CHURCH PROTOCOLS

- Gathering for online worship, formation, and community
- Limiting service ministries to safe protocols dedicated to essentials such as feeding ministries



Phase II: Return to offices and continued mitigation

HEALTH CHARACTERISTICS

- Fewer than 50 COVID-19 cases per 100,000 people for at least 14 days in the church's designated region (view next slide for Map of Regions)
- Safe treatment of all patients requiring hospitalization without resorting to crisis standards of care
- Testing all people with COVID-19 symptoms
- Active monitoring of confirmed cases and their contacts
- Case-Based Interventions including quarantine while awaiting test results, traced relationships over 14 days, and quarantine for close contacts with diagnostic testing



Map of Regions

Bureau of Community Health Systems

- County Health Departments
- District Offices
- Municipal Health Departments
- State Health Centers



Phase II: Return to offices and continued mitigation

CHURCH PROTOCOLS

- Church offices open in spaces large enough for physical distancing (in consultation with the bishop)
- Continued online worship, formation, and community
- Small church worship under 25 may restart in spaces large enough for physical distancing (in consultation with the bishop)
- Continued health safety protocols:
 - Wear masks
 - Wash hands
 - Sanitize frequently

More specific guidelines will follow once
Phase II health characteristics are closer to being met.



Phase III - Lifting of all physical distancing with protection

HEALTH CHARACTERISTICS

- Negative community spread
- Global vaccination
- Widespread therapeutic availability
- Comprehensive testing for virus and immunity



Phase III - Lifting of all physical distancing with protection

CHURCH PROTOCOLS

- Church offices opened
 - Missional and administrative capacities created
- Worship in churches
 - Increased small group gathering
 - Increased missional gathering
 - Continued online worship, formation, and community
 - Continued pastoral calling
- Return to service ministries with addition of new community relationships



Phase IV – Application of learnings & Future preparation

- Phase IV is part of all the other phases
- We need to prepare for future disruptions
- We are already learning from this event as a church
- It is not too soon to
 - Build in platforms for livestreaming and uploading our worship services
 - Utilize platforms for gathering online
 - Continue to create community and programs that are accessible online



This plan was created in consultation with the Episcopal Church, surrounding dioceses, and government and health authorities.