

*“Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.”*  
– Romans 12:12

## June Joy: Saint John's Moves Into Phase IV of Reopening

On May 27, Father David and the Vestry announced that beginning on May 30 our beloved Saint John's Church would move into Phase IV guidelines of our reopening plan, with just a few caveats. You may recall that on May 14, Bishop Poulson Reed announced that he has conferred the authority to each congregation for self-determining the protocols best for their own local contexts after May 23. For the Diocese at large, he has eliminated all COVID-related restrictions.

With the news that virus case reports locally are the lowest since this time last year, updated and relaxed recommendations from the CDC on gathering, and so many of our parishioners are now fully vaccinated, our church leadership determined that we could return to worship and meeting together more fully. As of the time you receive this newsletter, the following updates apply to Saint John's:

**Masks** – For the fully vaccinated, the wearing of face masks is optional while in the building for worship, meetings, etc. We request the wearing of a facemask at all times by anyone not fully vaccinated. If you are vaccinated, but prefer to wear a mask at this time, by all means please do. Hand sanitizer remains available at all access and gathering points. Please make use of it.

**Attendance** – Participation numbers for services, musical events and meetings will no longer have limitations. We will livestream services to the television monitor in the Common Room. For those who may have hesitancy to be in the nave during Sunday worship, watching from this space is an option for you.

**Communion** – Parishioners will come forward to the altar rail and remain standing to receive the Host or a blessing. The priests will continue to wear a mask during communion. For the time being, we will continue to receive only the Host during the liturgy. We will receive in One Kind while we continue to recruit and retrain volunteers who would like to assist as an LEM.

**Group Meetings** – We welcome back all Saint John's groups to meeting in the building. Be sure that your group leader has checked with Diana in the office for approved days, times and locations. Regarding non-church groups, the staff and Father David will be having conversations in the weeks ahead on how to best move forward to accommodate requests.

**Nursery** – The nursery for our youngest members resumed last week. All care workers will continue to wear masks and gloves.

**Choir and Congregational Singing** – Our larger volunteer choir returns to the chancel on Sundays at 10 a.m. and all worshipers may participate in congregational singing from the pews. Hymnals and Prayer Books have returned to the pews for all to use.

**The Daily Office** – Beginning the week of June 14, the church will be unlocked for a period ahead of Morning and Evening Prayers. All are invited to join Father David or our lay readers for the Daily Office in the church. Watch for details in the e-news.

**Food and Beverage** – Coffee and water will be provided in the Common Room between services on Sunday. Food may be brought into the building by groups and individuals, but must have been prepared with masks and gloves, or should be safely sourced and come in the original containers to the building.

**Honor One Another** – Please mirror the persons you encounter in the church. If they have a mask on, respect their space. Ask before shaking hands or hugging. Don't presume to sit too closely in the pew. Not everyone is in the same place in this journey out of the pandemic. We care for one another by respecting how each person or family wants to proceed.

**Access to the Building** – At this time the building will remain locked during the day. The staff will ensure church groups have access at the times they need it. The Vestry, lay leadership and Father David will be having conversations in the weeks ahead on how best to provide security to all with the least impact on public use this summer prior to having free access through building doors.

**Livestreaming** – We will continue to livestream our Sunday 10 a.m. mass, Evensong and many other significant offerings of the church. Please join us digitally if you are not feeling well or traveling.

As we look toward more regular parish operations in the near term, many will rejoice at the return of familiarity to our life at Saint John's. For our clergy, staff and lay leadership, we ask for your patience as we consider final details about ministry and worship after so many months of challenges and change.

We are not free of this terrible pandemic and must remain vigilant to keep everyone as safe as possible.

Father David and the Vestry encourage everyone to receive vaccinations. Please reach out to the church office if access remains an issue for you.