



Summary of Guidelines for the Episcopal Diocese of West Texas
Updated May 8, 2020

In accordance with state and city orders, and in accordance with the Guidelines for Phased Reopening of Churches in West Texas, a three-phase approach is our guide for considering our own transition to a modified return to public worship at St. Mark's.

Phase 1: Our Current Phase - Stay at Home Orders and Work Safe

Bishop Reed has extended the order to provide worship opportunities online-only through May 24. The City of San Antonio order is in place through May 19. Either of these is subject to extension.

Phase 2: Our Next Step - A Modified Return to Public Worship

When the following has occurred:

- a) Downward trajectory of COVID-19 cases, as well as influenza-like and COVID-like cases, reported within a consecutive 14-day period.
- b) Cities and state are testing all people with COVID-19 symptoms and can monitor the interactions of people with confirmed cases.
- c) Hospitals can treat all patients without resorting to crisis standards of care, and a robust testing program is in place for at-risk frontline workers, including emerging antibody testing.

Then the church may:

Church offices with facilities that can accommodate proper social distancing and proper sanitizing may reopen. Online worship continues as a supplement to in-person worship. **Modified in-person worship** begins with proactive health and safety protocols in place.

What does modified look like?

- At risk demographics, especially those 65 and older, and those with any with chronic underlying health conditions are strongly discouraged to attend. (This is more than 35% of our congregation.)
- Everyone should be wearing masks at all times including the clergy, except when preaching and offering the Eucharistic Prayer.
- Minimal number of worship leaders.
- Social distancing at all times. At St. Mark's this means sitting every 3 rows, staggered. (Maximum number allowed in the pews ~100 people.)
- Communion in bread only, no wine, and one parishioner at a time.
- Singing offered by soloists only- no clergy, choir or congregation.
- No gathering before or after the service.
- No nursery, Children's Chapel, or formation classes in person.
- A cleaning protocol appropriate for our nave and various surface types, completed after every service.
- Appropriate measures to protect the staff while working.
- No coffee, drink, or food service of any kind.
- Special training for all ushers, greeters, and all clergy and lay worship leaders.

- Screening of all staff and volunteers before every service.
- Prayer books and hymnals must be removed from worship space.

Requirements to Enter into Phase 2

A detailed plan must be developed, Vestry approved, and accepted by the Bishop before being communicated to the parish.

Communications in digital and printed form of approved plan must be provided to the congregation at least 2 weeks prior to a reopen date.

Phase 3: A Full Return

All restrictions removed when there is negative community spread, global vaccination, therapeutic availability, and community social distancing measures have ended.

Full Guidelines: https://www.dwtx.org/download_file/view/3898/