



St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

*Love one another. Just as I have loved you,
you also should love one another.*

John 13:34

February 3, 2022

After Christmas, we communicated that current practices designed to protect the health and safety of people at St. Stephen's would continue through February 6, after which we'd reassess. As we appear to be on the back side of the Omicron wave, we are adjusting or eliminating some measures, and will continue to reassess as the situation warrants.

These are our plans for weekdays and Sundays beginning February 7.

Masks

All of the following provisions are based on the assumption that everyone will wear a mask while indoors, whether in the parish house or the church, and that all will maintain safe distances from others.

We are assessing when and how to introduce a mask-optional policy, knowing that many will welcome the change, while others will feel less safe coming to church if masks are not required.

During the week/in the parish house beginning Monday, February 7

- We'll resume normal office operations, with staff working on site.
- Small groups will be allowed to meet, masked, and advance room reservations will be required. Large meetings should plan to meet virtually or, weather permitting, outdoors.
- Volunteers may work in the food pantry, the kitchen, and May Fair House.
- Customers will be permitted in the May Fair House.

Sundays beginning February 13

- Congregational singing resumes
- The choir present at Sunday services will continue to consist of staff singers for a few more weeks.
- We'll no longer mark off every other row of seating in the church.
- The Palmer Hall service will continue in Palmer Hall.

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- We are in active discernment about the return of healing prayer and anointing in the Celtic service.
- The nursery will be available beginning February 13; pre-registration will be required, and we'll need parent volunteers to assist paid workers.
- The Sunday Forum resumes with Heidi Schmidt and Monica Vega as our speakers on February 13. The Forum will continue to be held in the church to permit safe distancing as well as livestreaming.
- Formation for children and youth will resume February 20.
- Livestreaming of the 11:15 a.m., 5:30 p.m. and 8 p.m. services continues, as well as livestreaming of the Sunday Forum.

Meals, receptions, etc.

- The Sunday Community Supper will return March 13, when Daylight Saving Time will have begun and we can gather outdoors.
- We are reassessing the use of the parish house for funeral receptions, Sunday coffee service, parish suppers, and other food and beverage service.

Going forward

The world is moving from the pandemic phase of COVID-19 to an endemic phase. While we will continue to live with some risk, we will adjust our practices and norms to this reality. We continue to consult with other churches to learn from their experiences.

In everything, we are called to promote the health and well-being of all God's children as we seek ways to be together, offer praise to God, and do the work to which God calls us.

*Bear one another's burdens and
in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.*

Galatians 6:2