

Phase 1 Essential Elements and Q&A

This plan was given to all parishes to be fulfilled prior to the re-opening of the church and our response was approved of by our regional bishop. The details apply to both the O'Sullivan Hall and the adjacent Junior High area.

The O'Sullivan Hall will be the present location of weekday masses. The Junior High will be the location of Sunday masses. The church will hopefully open the second week of August.

1. Initial cleaning of the church and hall

Janitorial staff are already on this.

2. Maximum of 10 people may be in the church / hall at any one time for private prayer.

A volunteer will be stationed at the courtyard door to monitor the number of people in the church.

3. Only one door used for entering the church / hall

This will be the courtyard door for both sites; the other doors will remain closed and locked.

4. A volunteer, wearing gloves and face mask, is at the one entrance door, making sure that no more than ten persons are in the church at any one time, that those entering clean their hands and wear face masks, to open the door for those entering (avoiding multiple persons touching the door handles), and to take temperatures or check for symptoms of visitors.

This same volunteer mentioned above will perform these duties.

5. Sanitizing materials are available outside the church / hall door, as well as additional face masks for those who fail to bring their own.

The church has already acquired some of these items and is currently ordering more.

6. Holy water is removed from the fonts. Missalettes, song books, Bibles, prayerbooks, envelopes, pamphlets, and other items are removed from pews and doorways of the church.

Staff is already working on this.

7. A second volunteer, wearing gloves and face mask, is inside the church / hall to monitor those present, accompany those entering to a specific place in the church / hall, and make sure they continue to wear face masks, do not wander around the church / hall, do not touch statues and other items, remain in their assigned place throughout their visit, and generally maintain proper social distance.

A second volunteer will be trained to perform these duties.

8. For worshippers who remain longer than 15 minutes, the name, contact information, location within the church / hall, date and time, and name of others who came within 6 feet of them in the church is recorded. How will this be done?

The outside volunteer will record the date, time, name, and contact info of each person entering the church / hall, regardless of how long that person plans to remain in the church / hall. The inside volunteer will record each person's location and time within the church / hall, regardless of how long they remain.

9. When the visitor leaves the church, the area they occupied is sanitized. How will this be accomplished?

The inside volunteer will sanitize the area in question.

10. Any points of contact in the church / hall which more than one person is likely to touch (doorknobs, handrails, etc.) are to be sanitized daily.

Janitorial staff will take care of this.

Phase 2 Essential Elements and Q&A

1. What steps are being taken to deep clean the church / hall and parish offices before they are reopened to the public?

Our janitorial staff has already completed this task and will continue to do so.

2. How will you select the people (max 100 persons) permitted to attend at any one time? What type of reservation system will you be using?

We will have an online reservation system, accessible through the parish website; people will also be able to call in to the parish office to make a reservation. Once the maximum capacity for a particular Mass is met (possibly around 85-90 people, given that we need room for the presider, cantor, accompanist, lector, EM, film "crew," ushers), people will need to choose a different Mass.

3. How will you limit the number of people entering the church in conformity with the restricted requirement?

We will have volunteers standing at the only unlocked doors (Emerson Ave doors for the church, the interior parking lot doors for the hall), and these volunteers will count the people entering the church. Once the maximum number of persons is met, the doors will be closed, and the volunteers will remain outside to direct any additional people to sit in the courtyard in chairs spaced >6 feet apart.

4. How will you notify parishioners of the requirement to limit to a specific number those permitted to enter the church for Mass and the Sacraments?

Along with the other new regulations and processes required for the reopening of the church for the Sacraments, this restriction will be announced to the parish at upcoming online Sunday liturgies, and will be posted on the parish website, sent out via email ("Pastor's Post") to parishioners on our email list, and mailed to all registered parishioners.

5. How might you arrange for people to attend Mass, if they can, on a weekday rather than Saturday night or Sunday, thereby leaving weekend slots available for those who cannot attend during the week?

In the announcement of the new regulations and processes (see #4, above), we will encourage people to avail themselves of the opportunity to attend Mass on a weekday, if they are able.

6. How will you prohibit others from entering the church once the maximum number has been reached?

The door monitor volunteers will close the church doors when the maximum permitted capacity is reached, and will direct people to the courtyard (see #3, above), where chairs will already be placed, >6 ft apart, and speakers will be set up so the people in the courtyard can hear the Mass. For the junior high area, there is sufficient area to prevent crowding.

7. What are the procedures for entering and leaving both the church building and the parking facilities to assure that proper distancing is maintained?

Parking spaces will be marked off so that only every other space is available for use. People will be encouraged to maintain appropriate distancing as they walk from their cars to the church and into a pew.

Only one set of doors (Emerson Ave for the church and parking lot inside door for the hall) will be available for entering the church / hall, and no exit through those doors will be permitted while people are entering for Mass. Pews will be marked off to maintain proper distancing between people who do not share a household.

When exiting the church building, people will be dismissed in sections (based on where they are seated within the church / hall) and permitted to use any of the three sets of doors (courtyard, 88th St, Emerson Ave) when they leave, so as to make proper distancing more manageable. From the hall and junior high area, people will leave through any door or the Emerson gate in the junior high area.

8. How will parking arrangements be made so that only every other parking space is used?

Cones will be placed in every other space, rendering those spaces unusable.

9. How will you arrange for people to sanitize their hands before entering the church?

The door monitor volunteers will direct all people entering the church / hall to sanitize their hands before entering the building.

10. What arrangements are there to take the temperature of each person who enters or, if not, how will you check each person for symptoms?

Each person, when using the online or phone-in reservation system, will be reminded of the health requirements for attending church services (temperature 100.3°F or below, no cough, no shortness of breath / breathing difficulty, no headache, no body aches, no recent loss of taste or smell, no sore throat, no recent contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19). These health requirements will also be posted at the church entrance. Additionally, the door monitor volunteers will take each person's temperature with a contactless thermometer to ensure they do not have a fever; anyone with a fever will be asked to return home.

11. How will you monitor the wearing of masks?

In order to enter the church, each person will be required to wear a suitable face mask; those not wearing them will be asked to return home. Extra face masks will be provided to those who forgot to bring one. All volunteers and staff are already required to wear face masks. Should any person inside the church remove his/her face mask, ushers will be tasked with asking them to re-mask (aka, the re-mask ask task).

12. How will you mark or identify the specific places where people may sit and restrict the places where they may not?

Signs will be placed on the seats of all pews which are to be left empty for proper distancing. Rather than roping off the pews, these signs covering the seats will mark which areas of the pews are not open to seating, while still making both ends of the pew accessible for ingress and egress (making movement into and out of the pews more amenable to proper distancing).

13. How will you arrange for music, congregational singing, responses, etc.?

There will be no handouts nor books for singing/responses. We will have a single cantor and a single accompanist, located at the front of the church, apart from the congregation. The congregation will be asked not to sing, so as to minimize possible aerosolization effects.

14. How will you take up and care for the collection so that people do not touch collection baskets, receptacles, money bags, the safe, etc.?

Donations will be collected at the exits to the church / hall, after the service is over. Baskets will be placed on the ground, guarded by ushers, and people may drop their donations into the baskets as they exit the church / hall. The ushers will empty the baskets into the money bags and place those in the safe as usual. They will sanitize their hands before and after handling the money, baskets, and safe.

15. How will you maintain proper distancing where people are sitting in the church?

Seating in the pews will be available in a “checkerboard” pattern, with an empty pew between each available seating section. For example, pew 1 will have seating in the right half, pew 2 will have no seating, pew 3 will have seating in the left half, pew 4 will have no seating, pew 5 will have seating in the right half, and so on. People will be encouraged to sit with their household in a pew half, maintaining at least 6 ft between themselves and a person not of their household. The sections unavailable for seating will be clearly marked with signs on the seat at each unavailable space. People will be asked not to move the signs and to sit only at empty seats.

For the hall and junior high area, chairs are provided with proper spacing.

16. How will you arrange for Communion to be distributed, including maintaining proper social distance as people approach the sanctuary? Who will distribute Communion? What will be done in case contact is made between the priest/EM and communicant? When will Communion be distributed?

Holy Communion will be distributed at the usual time in the Mass. The masked priest/EM will bring Holy Communion to the communicants, rather than the other way around. The congregation will remain at their places, and the priest/EM will distribute Holy Communion by standing in the empty pew in front of each communicant (see #15, above). The priest/EM will sanitize his/her hands before distributing Holy Communion, as has been the usual procedure in the past. Should any contact with a communicant be made, the priest/EM will re-sanitize his/her hands. The priest/EM will have a hand sanitizer dispenser with him/her for this purpose.

17. How will people be dismissed from the church building so that the social distance is maintained while exiting?

At the close of the Mass, the congregation will be asked by the cantor to remain in their places. The cantor will then dismiss the congregation by quarter-sections (of the church / hall / junior high area). As each section is dismissed, people will be asked to maintain proper distancing as they leave, as well as invited to choose which of the three exits to use, thus offering them more distancing options. The door monitor volunteers will not permit anyone to enter the church / hall / junior high area at this time, because the church will need to be sanitized between services, so there is no risk of a door being used as both an exit and an entrance.

18. How will the church building and toilet areas be sanitized after each Mass or after the occupation of a pew for private prayer?

After each Mass, members of the janitorial staff will sanitize the pew areas which are open for seating, as well as the restrooms. The church / hall / junior high area will be closed to visitors during this time.

When the church / hall is open for private prayer, the inside volunteer will be responsible for sanitizing pew areas after each person leaves (see #9, Phase 1, above).

19. What kind of signage will be used in and outside the church building to direct people and remind them about their responsibility to keep the right social distance, wear face masks, and wash or sanitize their hands?

Signs will be posted at the entrance doors, detailing all of these responsibilities. These responsibilities will also be included in the email, snail mail, and webpage notifications regarding the re-opening of the church for private devotion and celebration of the Sacraments (see #4, above). Finally, these will be on the Mass registration webpage, available to each person as they register to attend Mass (see #2, above).

20. What steps are being taken to reopen the parish offices?

They are already open.

21. How many volunteers will you need throughout the week, at Mass times, for special liturgical events, and how will they be recruited, trained, and scheduled?

When the church / hall is open for private devotion, at least 2 volunteers will be present at all times, one outside the entrance door, and one inside the church.

For each Mass, at least 8 volunteers will be present (2 outside the entrance door before Mass, and 2 at each of three exits to guard the collection baskets; these latter 6 will also be available inside the church before and during Mass to help guide people in maintaining proper distancing).

Parishioners will be encouraged to volunteer to help with these positions at the same time as all the new procedures and guidelines are disseminated: at the online Masses, via email, via snail mail, on the Mass registration webpage, and on the church website. A parishioner interested in helping will be asked to submit his/her name, contact info, and availability. Volunteers will be trained by parish staff before being permitted to assist as a volunteer. They will be scheduled by parish staff based on their availability, and this availability will dictate the hours at which the church can be open for private devotion and the celebration of Sacraments.

22. How and where will you arrange for confessions to be heard?

Confessions will be held in the outdoor church courtyard.

23. Besides the church building, what other areas are being prepared for use by the congregation and how will these areas be used, cleaned, sanitized, and otherwise made ready for congregational use? How many people will these areas accommodate?

Besides the church building, the only other area to be used by the congregation is the courtyard, which will be available as an "overflow" area once the maximum permitted capacity of the church has been reached. Chairs will be placed > 6 ft apart in the courtyard to maintain proper distancing (see # 3, above). Any chairs used during

Mass will be sanitized in the same manner as the pews in the church. The courtyard can accommodate several chairs in safety as it is open air.

24. If you intend to use the parking lot for any outdoor services, what are they and how many people do you anticipate accommodating?

As the church is closed due to remodeling, Sunday masses will occur in the northern end of the parking lot (away from the parking spaces), accommodating no more than the permissible amount, using all of the directives given. Weekday masses will be held in the parish hall.

25. Who will direct and oversee the faithful implementation of the parish reopening plan?

1. The pastor will take overall responsibility for the faithful implementation of the plan.
2. The business administrator / plant manager will coordinate with the janitorial staff to ensure sanitization of church facilities.
3. A bi-weekly report will be made to the parish staff and the Parish Pastoral Council concerning the ongoing execution of the plan.

Additionally, our parish:

1. has removed all hymn books, missalettes, envelopes and other items from the pews and doorways of the church, and janitorial staff will daily make sure that these remain removed;
2. will, for the foreseeable future, dispense with the offertory procession, any physical sign of peace, holding hands during the Our Father, and any other form of touching;
3. will have a supply of extra face masks on hand for anyone showing up without their own;
4. will provide disposable gloves and any other necessary protective equipment for staff members and volunteers expected to wear them;
5. will not share liturgical clothing or vestments, whether for priests or lay ministers;
6. will keep holy water and baptismal fonts dry (see #6, Phase 1, above);
7. will sanitize any points of contact in the church before and after Masses (see #18 and #23, Phase 2, above), as well as daily (see #9, Phase 1, above);

8. will sanitize microphones after each use;
9. will distribute Holy Communion only in the hand and only under the form of consecrated bread, except for any communicants unable to receive Holy Communion under this form due to celiac disease; these will contact the presider prior to Mass to inform him, and a separate chalice will be consecrated for each such communicant;
will ensure that each priest/EM wears a face mask while distributing Holy Communion and sanitizes his/her hands before and after distributing Holy Communion;
10. will ensure that the ministers and members of the congregation wear face masks at all times while in the church and on the parish property, except for the priest when he is at least 6 ft away from anyone else;
11. will keep doors and windows open whenever possible to provide healthy ventilation;
12. will establish a printed schedule for frequent and regular cleaning and sanitizing of facilities and equipment; and
13. will obtain all necessary and recommended cleaning and sanitizing products and equipment.
14. will resume Baptisms on an individual basis. Funerals can be held in the church after August 15, God willing. Until that date, they can be in the parish hall or a Catholic mortuary.