

St. James COVID-19 Reopening Directive (CRD)
Approved by St. James Parish Council 2 May 2020

The goal of the St. James COVID-19 Reopening Directive, or CRD, is to faithfully bear witness to Jesus Christ in and amongst the worshipping community of St. James through ensuring the safety and health of our neighbors. The CRD is a four-phase plan that provides for certain public health conditions to be met prior to the implementation of the next phase. At any point in time, the plan may be put on hold, maintaining the current phase. The plan may regress to an earlier phase. Or, if deemed necessary, the parish council may elect to return to operating within the COVID-19 Response Plan (14 March 2020) should the CRD fail to provide appropriate protections for members and guests alike of St. James. The executive committee of St. James certifies when each phase of the CRD is to be implemented. The parish council or their designee has the authority to enforce the guidelines of this plan.

No matter what phase of the CRD St. James is operating under, parishioners are reminded to practice proper hygiene and other practical public health mitigation efforts including staying home if they are ill, think they are ill, or have had direct contact with someone who is ill.

Guidelines from the Federal Government (including the CDC, NIH, etc.) and other public health officials will be followed with the implementation of the below phases.

All parishioners are strongly encouraged to participate in TestIowa. If you need assistance participating, please reach out to Pr. Kyle to navigate the process.

The parish council will determine the best practice in relation to congregational singing and celebration of the sacraments once worship is again occurring in-person.

The metrics of the CRD are to be retroactive. For example: if there begins to be a progressive decline in COVID-19 case counts beginning on 18 May and it continues for two weeks, then on 1 June, the executive committee could authorize phase one of this directive.

On 28 April 2020, the parish council moved to continue operating in Phase III of the COVID-19 Response Plan through 31 May 2020. This means that the parish building will remain locked, there will be no in-person activities, and worship will continue in an electronic fashion. Beginning 1 June 2020, the CRD as outlined below would be in place and the executive committee would authorize the appropriate phase.

At any point of time during the re-opening process, critical detail will be given to cleaning and sanitizing of the parish facility with increasing frequency as more persons enter the building in accordance with CDC/EPA guidelines.

As we approach the summer months and the activities that come during that time of the year, the parish council will determine if an event will occur and discern guidelines surrounding any given event. This includes but is not limited to VBS and the High School mission trip.

The parish council will consult with the church's insurance company frequently during the re-opening process and augment this plan in relation to their guidance.

If at any point in time a parishioner becomes ill with COVID-19 and has been in attendance at a small group gathering such as a house church or an in person indoor or outdoor worship service, the parishioner is **HIGHLY** encouraged to contact Pr. Kyle or President Dale Thoreson immediately in order that the parish may assist with contact tracing and appropriate disease mitigation processes.

The concept of this document comes from the research and work of the Wisconsin Council of Churches, the "Opening Up America Again" plan as outlined by the federal government, and the work of various church bodies around the country in conjunction with public health and scientific guidance.

Pre-Phase I

St. James continues to operate under the guidance of Phase III of the COVID-19 Response Plan

Phase I

After two consecutive weeks of daily declining case counts of COVID-19 in the state of Iowa, widespread testing is available to all those who require testing, and stable supplies of personal protective equipment are reported by public health agencies, St. James may:

- Maintain worshiping through electronic means via Zoom
- Funerals and weddings may occur in the sanctuary should they be permitted by law (but will be encouraged to occur outdoors)
 - These gatherings are limited to ten persons or less in the entire facility
 - Persons participating in a funeral or wedding are required to
 - Certify verbally they are not experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19 as outlined by the CDC and have participated in Test Iowa and complied with the Test Iowa weekly check-ins
 - Participants are to maintain proper social distancing of 6' or more
 - Participants are to wear a face mask at all times when in the building
 - Participants are to practice proper hand hygiene (soap and water or 60%+ alcohol hand sanitizer) immediately upon entry into the building
 - Only persons living locally in Butler County will be allowed to be present
- The parish office will continue to operate; however, the parish building will remain locked to visitors. If a visitor is invited into the building, any person's present must adhere to the guidelines above in relation to a funeral or wedding
- All other parish activities and meetings must occur electronically

Phase II

If after implementation of phase one, there continues to be a daily decline in case counts of COVID-19 in the state of Iowa for three additional consecutive weeks, St. James may:

- Continue to hold worship electronically via Zoom
- Funeral and worship guidelines remain unchanged from Phase I
- The parish council may encourage parishioners to gather together in "house churches" to participate in worship via Zoom as they are comfortable to do so
 - Persons over the age of 65 or those who have other underlying health conditions are strongly encouraged to ponder their safety in relation to joining a "house church"
 - The group size of "house churches" is ideally limited to ten persons as to avoid large groups gathering together
 - After a person commits to worshiping through electronic means in a "house church," it is highly recommended that individuals should continue to participate in the same "house church" and avoid moving around to other "house churches" to help mitigate the possible spread of COVID-19
 - Individuals participating in "house churches" shall refrain from doing so if they are experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19, think they may be ill, or have had contact with someone they think may be ill
 - It is suggested that persons consider wearing facemasks while participating in "house churches" and practice proper hand hygiene (soap and water or 60%+ alcohol hand sanitizer)
- Committees and small groups (ten persons or less) will still be strongly encouraged to meet electronically
- The St. James parish facility will remain closed

- If conditions permit (and public gatherings greater than ten persons are permitted by law), the St. James Parish Council may authorize public in-person worship through an outdoor setting
 - Persons over the age of 65 or those who have other underlying health conditions are strongly encouraged to ponder their safety in relation to attending outdoor worship
 - This worship experience would still be offered via electronic means
 - Parishioners participating in-person in the outdoor setting would be required to
 - Follow all appropriate federal and local social distancing guidelines including but not limited to maintain at least 6' of distance between members of different households
 - Wear a mask
 - Practice proper hand hygiene (soap and water or 60%+ alcohol hand sanitizer)
 - There will be no sharing of the peace or passing of an offering plate

Phase III

If after implementation of phase two, there continues to be a daily decline in case counts of COVID-19 in the state of Iowa for four additional consecutive weeks, St. James may:

- Continue to hold worship electronically via Zoom
- Begin (or continue) in-person outdoor worship if public gatherings greater than ten persons are permitted by law
- The St. James Parish Council may elect to begin holding in-person worship in the St. James sanctuary if public gatherings greater than ten persons are permitted by law observing the following conditions
 - Persons over the age of 65 and persons with underlying health conditions will be strongly encouraged to ponder their safety in relation to attending worship in person and are encouraged to remain at home and worship via electronic means
 - If permitted by law, 65 persons may be permitted to worship together in the sanctuary and 35 persons in the parish hall
 - Observing proper social distancing practices (i.e. maintain a 6' distance between persons of different households)
 - Wearing a mask
 - Observing proper hand hygiene upon entering the building (soap and water or 60%+ alcohol hand sanitizer)
 - Parishioners will be seated and dismissed by ushers to help in maintaining social distancing
 - There will be no sharing of the peace or passing of an offering plate
 - There will be no social/coffee hour following worship
 - All worship materials will be provided electronically and made available upon the projection screen (hymnals will be removed; *parishioners are encouraged to bring their own hymnal if they so desire; parishioners will have an opportunity to "check out" a hymnal*)
 - A reservation system will be devised to facilitate in-person worship capacity
- The same guidelines as above would be in place for any kind of worship, including but not limited to a funeral or wedding (post-funeral luncheons will not be permitted)
- The parish office will be open for appointments (the building will remain closed; no in person activities)
- Groups of St. James will continue to be encouraged to meet via electronic means

Phase IV

If after implementation of phase three, there continues to be a daily decline in case counts of COVID-19 in the state of Iowa for an additional four consecutive weeks, St. James may:

- The parish council may authorize a return to full in-person worship capacity

- Maintain an electronic worship presence
- Persons over the age of 65 or those who have other underlying health conditions are strongly encouraged to ponder their safety in relation to attending worship
- Require appropriate public health disease prevention and mitigation measures as prescribed by public health authorities
- Permit groups to meet in-person as deemed necessary and resume in-person educational endeavors as necessary

The Parish Council asks that parishioners of St. James please remain patient throughout the re-opening process. It is asked that all persons remember that this is a plan which is subject to change in relation to the conditions that are being experienced. As the people of St. James, we must be prepared to take a few steps forwards and possibly many steps backwards at any point in time. The Parish Council is committed to regularly reviewing the re-opening process and making scientific fact-based decisions in conjunction with thorough moral deliberation that benefits the wellbeing of all the people of St. James and the greater Allison community.