



# All Saints: Moving Forward in Hope and Love

*Thomas said to Jesus, “Lord we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way? Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life.”* John 14:5-6

May 7, 2020

In the first few weeks of our collective efforts to contain the spread of COVID-19, many of us hoped that the most restrictive measures of social distancing would be immediately effective, and the ensuing disruption to our work, worship, and social activities would be brief. Yet, here in Nebraska we are currently not projected to reach our peak of daily new infections until late May or June. And so, we continue to live in a sort of emotional and existential limbo, bouncing between grief and hope, uncertainty, disbelief and anger.

People of faith are not immune to human suffering, nor are we spared anxiety or grief. We read the stories of those who came before us who walked through valleys of darkness, wandered in the wilderness, and searched for meaning in chaos, and we travel with them in faith and trust, calling upon God for guidance and strength.

Both your faithfulness and your support for one another and our All Saints community, is amazing and heart-warming. Over the last several weeks, people have called friends and strangers, learned to worship in new ways, and continued to support the mission and ministry of this community. You have responded to the abrupt end of in-person worship and fellowship with creativity, goodwill, and enthusiasm. And while the desire to return to normal has been strong, the compassion for the safety of one another has been awe-inspiring.

Now we must prepare ourselves for what happens next. Although the pandemic has perhaps added some curves ahead, our path forward continues to be one that is illuminated by Christ's light. We are in the midst of what may turn out to be a social transformation that we could never have dreamed of a few months ago—but be assured that if we embrace this moment together, learn all that we can from it, and listen for the Holy Spirit's voice calling us to new ways of discipleship, we will rise up together in love and strength beyond our imagining.

The following page contains an outline of our plans moving forward. It does not have specific dates, but rather indicators for when we can move from one phase to another. We ask that you continue to live in this flexible kind of hope and love for one another as we proceed with a goal of preserving the health and well-being of all in our community. In the coming days, we will be sending out details about new opportunities for education and fellowship for the next two months. We pray you will continue to grow in and share God's love through our shared life in Christ, knowing that Jesus, the way, the truth, and the life, will always be there to illumine our path.

With prayers for God's peace that passes understanding,  
Rev. Marisa, Rev. Karen, Rev. Keith

## Phase One

Strict social distancing

### Public Health Indicators for Phase One

⇒ COVID-19 cases and deaths are increasing regionally.

Our current phase at All Saints.

- Worship is virtual, livestreamed or recorded
- Bible studies, coffee hours, social gatherings, and meetings via telephone or online
- Pastoral care via telephone or online
- Continued ministries of service and compassion (e.g. food pantry) within protocols of safety
- Preliminary adjustments of budgets, ministry goals

## Phase Two

Significantly limited gatherings allowed

### Public Health Indicators for Phase Two

- ⇒ 14-Day consecutive decline in numbers of people testing positive and of COVID-19 deaths
- ⇒ Widespread testing / contact tracing available to track the spread of the virus
- ⇒ Sufficient supply of personal protective equipment
- ⇒ Healthcare systems have sufficient equipment and are not overwhelmed

Phase Two will be gradually introduced at All Saints as the region achieves the health indicators above. Note that we anticipate this phase will be fluid, and our response will vary as needed based on the changing situation. We are planning for Phase Two currently, and hope to begin implementing it in stages starting in June.

- Church offices will re-open to parishioners and the public in ways that allow physical distance to be maintained, pursuant to development and strict enforcement of proper sanitation measures
- Very small group gatherings, including weddings and funerals, will be permitted with physical distancing, proper sanitation, and the use of masks
- All worship will continue to be held online. The possibility of outdoor worship with proper distancing will be considered per diocesan approval
- Pastoral care to those in high-risk categories for contracting the virus remains restricted

## Phase Three

Moderately limited gatherings (the “new normal” for several months)

### Public Health Indicators for Phase Three

- ⇒ COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations, and deaths have fallen to very low levels
- ⇒ Widespread testing and tracking
- ⇒ Healthcare system is able to treat all in need

Indoor public worship will resume, according to guidelines set by health officials and the diocese, including appropriate practices for the celebration of Eucharist.

- Continued physical distancing and masking requirements likely for in-person gatherings
- Larger group ministries (youth groups, camps, classes) may resume within established guidelines
- Continued assessments of pandemic impact and prayerful discernment of future ministry

## Post-Pandemic

Increased and Renewed Worship, Mission, and Outreach

### Public Health Indicators for Life After the COVID-19 Pandemic

- ⇒ A vaccine has been developed and is available to the general public
- ⇒ Treatments of proven effectiveness are widely available
- ⇒ Testing for virus immunity is widespread

Both in-person and virtual worship will be offered. Meetings and education may be in-person, virtual, or both. Increased engagement in small group gatherings and continued expansion of congregation-wide pastoral care for each other.

- Support current online giving options and implement additional low- and no-contact giving opportunities.
- Increase in intentional collaboration with other parishes, churches, and organizations in the community and across the state
- Expanded building and campus use to meet a growing mission field
- On-going adjustments to budgets and mission in alignment with the parish leadership’s key strategic vision and goals
- Emergency preparedness plans and strategies in place