

D I G N I T Y / W A S H I N G T O N

Regathering Plan

**Dignity/Washington
as hosted by**

St. Margaret's Episcopal Church

April 23, 2021

St. Margaret's Episcopal Church

1820 Connecticut Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20009

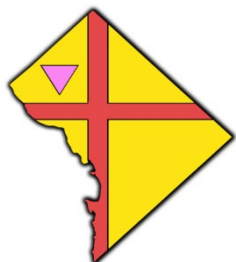
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Plan received approval: 4/25/2021



DIGNITY/WASHINGTON

A Community of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Catholics, Our Families, and Friends

April 23, 2021

The Right Reverend Mariann Edgar Budde
Bishop of Washington
Episcopal Church House
Mount St. Alban
Washington, DC 20016

Dear Bishop Budde:

As you may know, the congregation of St. Margaret's Episcopal Church has graciously welcomed Dignity/Washington to use their space to celebrate our Mass each Sunday since Pentecost Sunday in 1987. Today, we would like to present our **Regathering Plan** at St. Margaret's with the intent to celebrate our first in-person Mass on Pentecost Sunday, May 23, 2021, at 6 p.m.

In September 2020, a small group of Dignity/Washington members formed a "Re-Opening Committee," co-chaired by Mary DeLia and Rory Hytrek. Working with our Liturgy Committee, they developed plans and guidance to gather for Mass. The proposed plan is designed in a manner to protect our congregation, the space at St. Margaret's, and mitigates the threat of exposure.

Working closely with Reverend Richard Mosson Weinberg and the parallel Regathering Committee at St. Margaret's, led by Jenny Carson, Junior Warden, the following plan demonstrates our understanding of each aspect of gathering at the church and the procedures and policies to which we will adhere. Should you have any questions, please contact Mary DeLia by email at marydeliafamily@gmail.com, or by telephone at 609-638-3487.

As always, we extend our gratitude to St. Margaret's Episcopal Church for opening its doors to us all those years ago, and we hope our plan provides the level of detail needed for your approval.

Thank you,

Christopher Flow
President

Attachments

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Preparation for a Safe Regathering

- All gathering spaces will be thoroughly cleaned before and after services per Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines and using a product registered with the Environmental Protection Agency.
- Door and windows will be propped open as much as possible to ventilate the gathering space.
- Tape, floor decals, and signage will be used in a dignified manner to facilitate social distancing and provide guidance and information to our congregants about safety procedures and protocols.
- Prayer books will be removed from the pew pockets.
- Baptismal font and holy water stoups will remain empty.
- Congregants must register in advance to reserve a spot for in-person Masses.
- All attendees will be required to sign and return the “*Covenant for Regathering*” in advance of attending, as is required by the Episcopal Diocese of Washington. Additional copies will be available at the welcome table upon arrival.
- The allowable capacity of the church in our current regathering phase is 60 people.
- A welcome table will be set up at the entrance for check-in. On the table will be extra face masks, hand sanitizer, printed single-use Bulletins, and a collection basket.
- Our weekly digital Bulletin will continue to be sent to members’ email inboxes in advance of the Mass.
- Hand sanitizer will be available in strategic locations around the church. Restrooms will be stocked with hand soap and paper towels.
- Use of the restrooms at home and prior to arrival will be encouraged.
- Ministers and ushers will receive training in the implementation of protocols prior to our first regathering and in an ongoing manner.
- Personal protective equipment such as masks and gloves will be available to all ministers and ushers.
- When handling currency, ministers will wear gloves and wash hands thoroughly after completion.
- The parish library, kitchen, and social hall will be inaccessible.
- Congregants who are infectious, sick, or symptomatic are asked not to attend Mass. Congregants who are ill will be asked in a kind and loving manner to return home.
- A list of those who attended Mass will be kept by Dignity/Washington for a period of 30 days.

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Welcome and Gathering in Our Space

As we welcome Dignity/Washington members back to our place of worship, things will be different.

The Welcome Table

A welcome table will be set up at the entrance for check-in. If you have not pre-registered, there may not be room for you to attend our limited Mass. We encourage you to view our live stream on our Facebook page. All congregants must complete the “*Covenant for Regathering*” required by the Episcopal Diocese of Washington prior to attending Mass. The Covenant will be kept on file and verified upon arrival at church.

Masks

Masks **MUST** be worn by everyone who enters the church building. Masks must cover the mouth and nose at all times throughout the Mass until after exiting the building. Scarves and handkerchiefs **are not** acceptable face coverings, nor are masks with vents. Masks will be available at the welcome table for those who do not have one that meets these criteria.

Donations

Online donations are still strongly encouraged. If you would like to donate in person, a collection basket will be available at the welcome table both before and after Mass in an effort to avoid bottlenecks that can challenge social distancing protocols.

Seating

Attendees will be escorted to their seats by an usher and must remain at their seat throughout the Mass except for when they are instructed to receive Holy Communion. Restroom use is strongly discouraged. Please use the restroom prior to arriving at Mass.

Group Size

Groups larger than three (3) people will be split to accommodate socially distanced seating, except in circumstances where young children are involved.

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Worshiping in Our Space

Procession and Introductory Rites

- Welcome and introductory announcements.
- The presider and acolyte will process in from the Sacristy. They will wear masks at all times.
- The presider and acolyte will venerate the altar and take their places at either side of the altar.
- When it is time to be seated, the presider and acolyte will sit in the first pews across the aisle from each other, separated by six feet from other congregants.
- Congregants are requested to **not project their voices** in response to the celebration throughout the Mass, whether when speaking or singing. Singing is strongly discouraged.

Liturgy of the Word

- Lectors will deliver the readings from the pulpit using the pulpit microphone. Their masks will remain on at all times.
- The Lectionary will not be used for readings or for the Gospel. Printed copies will be made available for the lectors and the presider.
- The Homily will be delivered from a designated spot at least six feet from the congregation.

Creed and Prayers of the Faithful

- Congregants will be reminded to **always maintain their masks in place and not to project their voice** while offering their personal intentions.

Preparation of the Gifts

- Attendees will not be permitted to bring up the gifts.
- The acolyte and presider will disinfect their hands prior to approaching the altar.
- The sacred vessels with the bread and wine, the Sacramentary, and the corporal and purificator will be on the credence table in the sanctuary.

Liturgy of the Eucharist

- The acolyte will remain six feet from the presider at all times.
- Presider and acolyte will wear their masks during the consecration; a corporal will be placed on the ciborium and a purificator on the chalices.
- The consecrated Host will be available in only one form.

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Worshiping in Our Space (continued)

Communion Rite

- There will be no physical contact between congregants during the Communion Rite. This includes holding hands during the Lord's Prayer and extending a physical sign of peace during the Rite of Peace, with the exception of those seated together in groups.
- Within seating groups, if congregants chose to embrace or kiss, they **must do so without lowering their masks** at any time.
- Singing is discouraged during the Lord's Prayer. Attendees are requested to sing softly and to **not project your voice** if you sing.

Receiving Holy Communion

- Ushers will direct one pew at a time to come up to receive Communion.
- A line will be taped on the floor designating where congregants should stand to have the Host placed into their open hands. Another line on the floor will be taped to show the presider or Eucharistic minister where to stand.
- Once the Host has been placed into their hands, congregants are **asked to return to their seat before removing their mask to consume the Host**. No chalice will be offered.
- Those who normally receive the Host on the tongue are respectfully asked to receive it in the hands as a temporary measure.
- If the presider or Eucharistic minister accidentally touches the hand of a recipient, they will place the ciborium on a side table and sanitize their hands before continuing to distribute Communion.
- Those who are unable or do not wish to receive Holy Communion are asked to process up to the alter and return to their seats in turn with the rest of the congregation.
- All attendees are asked to return to their seats and remain there until ushers direct them to disperse from the building.

Music

- There will be no congregational singing. We ask attendees to please refrain from singing during the Mass. If you are unable to refrain from singing, we must stress the importance of singing softly. **Do not project your voice**. No song sheets will be made available.
- Cantors and musicians must wear masks at all times and will remain six feet from each other and all congregants and ministers. Wind instruments must have bell caps.

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Going Forth from Our Space

Concluding Rites

- After the Prayer after Communion the congregation will remain seated for the president's announcements. The president will deliver announcements from a designated spot at least six feet from the congregation.
- After the announcements, the presider will give the final blessing. Then the presider and acolyte will process to the Sacristy.

Dismissal

- Please exit the church when you are instructed to do so.
- Rows will be dismissed by the ushers one at a time, starting at the back of the church, to avoid any congestion that could challenge social distancing protocols.
- The presider will not greet congregants at the back of the church.
- Social gatherings will not be permitted in the church after Mass.
- A recycling bin will be available for Bulletins, or attendees can take their Bulletin home for review and to recycle.

All spaces used in St. Margaret's during the Mass will be cleaned according to CDC guidelines.

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