

## Dear Friends in Christ,

It is with great compassion and deep sadness that we write today to inform you that Episcopalians in Michigan will move back to no in-person gatherings, effective this Sunday, November 22nd.

At the same time, the four dioceses have created a new in-between phase in our re-entry directives - Phase 1.5 - which, unlike Phase 1, allows for the ability to livestream from inside the church building.

While the Governor's recent new restrictions expedited this announcement by a few days, this step back in capacity was anticipated by our Standing Committees and our partners in the other Episcopal dioceses in Michigan in light of the rising rates of risk and infections in our state. And while the State's restrictions expire in three weeks (as of the writing of this notice), we anticipate living into Phase 1.5 for some time, including over the Advent and Christmas seasons and into the winter months.

In brief, here are the main points of what Phase 1.5 will entail. Please read the directive document for more specific details as you plan for the months ahead.

- Buildings are closed to visitors.
- Office staff are encouraged to work from home, but minimal in-person staffing is permitted to maintain essential operations.
- No in-person worship is allowed. However, livestreaming from inside the building is permitted with no more than ten participants, limited to those holding specific duties (worship leaders, technical support).
- In-person meetings and gatherings (such as bible studies, vestry meetings, community groups, etc.) are not permitted and are encouraged to employ online modes of gathering instead.
- Service programs with distribution ministries are permitted on an outdoor, curbside basis only.

There have been a few other modifications to the "[Plan for Re-Entry for Great Lakes Episcopalians](#)." In most cases, the change clarifies the language of an existing directive, such as requiring masks to be worn both inside and outside. One directive has been strengthened from an encouragement to a requirement: contact tracing logs are now required for any persons entering the building for Phases 1-2. Additionally, an Appendix C has been added, which lists

out the requirements of the phases as a table for at-a-glance consultation. A log of all updates is included at the end of the document.

**[Click here to access the Plan for Re-Entry  
for Great Lakes Episcopalians.](#)**

We want to emphasize - while our buildings are closed, our churches are not. We can continue to share the Good News and beloved community with one another during this time of physical separation, especially through the use of online tools. If your congregation has not yet begun gathering online but would like to and don't know where to start, please consider reaching out to Canon Katie Forsyth at [kforsyth@eastmich.org](mailto:kforsyth@eastmich.org) or [kforsyth@edwm.org](mailto:kforsyth@edwm.org) to connect you with best practices, others in our community taking on this work, and resources from the dioceses to assist you. A list of resources is also included at [eastmich.org/coronavirus](http://eastmich.org/coronavirus) and [edwm.org/coronavirus](http://edwm.org/coronavirus).

These have been difficult months for so many reasons. It's been a time of isolation for some, of grief for many. It's been a time of waiting and waiting some more. We are so encouraged in these difficult months by the great compassion, generosity, and willingness of you, the people of Eastern and Western Michigan, to try new and difficult things in a new and difficult context. As we now move into the winter months, we must continue to extend to ourselves and to others that compassion, generosity, and willingness to protect one another and ourselves by continuing to refrain from in-person gatherings, by washing our hands, and by distancing ourselves physically from one another. It has and will save lives.

May God bless you and keep you, remembering that it is in God that we find comfort and peace and it is in community that we also find compassion and encouragement.

**Yours in Christ,**



**Janet Huff-Worvie**  
President of the Standing Committee  
of Eastern Michigan



**The Rev. Dr. Randall R. Warren**  
President of the Standing Committee  
of Western Michigan

---

This notice was sent to all clergy, wardens, and listed parish administrators in addition to our elected diocesan leadership and general subscriber lists.



**The Episcopal Diocese of Eastern Michigan**

[www.eastmich.org](http://www.eastmich.org)

877-752-6020



**The Episcopal Diocese of Western Michigan**

[www.edwm.org](http://www.edwm.org)

616-319-2006



*Copyright © 2020 The Episcopal Dioceses of Eastern and Western Michigan, All rights reserved.*

Want to change how you receive these emails?  
You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).