

October 7, 2020

On September 20th, after months of services streamed over the internet, and garden services, our church welcomed our members back into the sanctuary for an evening service. I write to you as one of the members of the Covid Response Committee, which formed over the summer to advise Father Paulikas on how to adapt the workings on the church in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, drawing on recommendations from published expertise, common sense and conservative compliance with diocesan, city and state guidelines. If you have attended the in-person Sunday evening services since then, or are considering it, I hope you saw and took a look at the church's message about [Reopening Plans](#). In this plan, we describe the changes we have made to lower the risk of Covid transmission within the church; physical distancing, limiting the number of people permitted, opening windows for ventilation, and more. These are things can be put into place through the work of the church staff. But other, crucial, elements of the Reopening Plan are in your hands as a member of the congregation. These are the parts of the plan that we can not "enforce," but can only do together in a spirit of love.

Let me recap these parts of the plan:

- If you, or anyone in your household, is not feeling well, do not come to the service. Pay particularly close attention to any loss or change in your ability to taste or smell, which you might not typically associate with illness
- Similarly, if you have recently travelled to a state on the requiring [quarantine](#) (it's almost all of them at this point), please, do not attend in person services
- If you are attending services at All Saints', you are a person who has "spent time in a crowd," and therefore on the list of people recommended for ongoing Covid testing by the Health Department. Because so many people with Covid do not have symptoms, when we get tested, we are not only protecting our own health, but doing the right thing for our communities, including the community of All Saints. You can ask your doctor what they recommend in terms of testing, or just walk in to any NYC Health and Hospitals testing facility (list is [here](#)) for free. The closest facilities to the church are at the Red Hook Pool and at Cumberland, near Fort Greene Park. You can even get a [free rapid test](#) via appointment. (For my family, the rapid test results came back in 4 hours last week).

I recommend you get in a rhythm of testing at a regular interval. Put it in your calendar.

This is what it is going to take to keep each other as safe as possible.

Asking you, under certain circumstances, NOT to come to church, or making recommendations about a medical diagnostic test, is not what comes naturally to a church, but these are very strange times. What have not changed, however, are the bonds that unite us. We must be present for each other, in whatever way is safe, if you do feel sick, when you feel worried, please reach out to the church, in addition to seeking medical care.

Finally, as you have been hearing about the resurgence of Covid in Brooklyn neighborhood, you may wonder if it continues to be safe to hold in-person worship at All Saints. You can be certain that the Covid Response Committee, and our clergy are considering that same question, and will be watching the data carefully and seeking guidance from state and city authorities. If you have an interest in these matters, please get in touch.

Tom Cannell  
Covid Response Committee