

# Covenant for Gathering Anew: Outdoor Gatherings Only

## The Episcopal Diocese of Central New York

*Parishes may complete this Covenant to request permission from the Bishop to resume in-person gatherings **outdoors only** as outlined in the Step 2 guidelines published by the Diocese at [cnyepiscopal.org/faithful-response-coronavirus](http://cnyepiscopal.org/faithful-response-coronavirus). This Covenant does not allow for building use by the congregation or public.*

*Completed Covenants may be sent to the diocesan office via email to [kmcdaniel@cnyepiscopal.org](mailto:kmcdaniel@cnyepiscopal.org).*

Affirming that God is calling Central New York Episcopalians to live into our shared vision of a **world healed by love**, we renew our commitment to love God, one another, and all God's creation by:

- Sharing God's love and hope with our communities in this uncertain time;
- Keeping Jesus' command to "remember the least of these"--the most vulnerable members of our community--by limiting physical contact and initiating practices to slow the spread of infectious disease;
- Continuing to provide people with the very best pastoral care now and in the months to come;
- Continuing prayer, worship, and formation, whether gathered in-person or online.
- Continuing community outreach ministry where this is safe and feasible;
- Following the diocesan guidelines published at [cnyepiscopal.org/faithful-response-coronavirus](http://cnyepiscopal.org/faithful-response-coronavirus);

We covenant with God and one another to care for our communities through our faithful response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

*(Please provide written responses to the following questions to demonstrate your commitment to upholding diocesan guidelines and requirements for safety within your ministry contexts.)*

- We will maintain connection with those who do not gather in-person by:

"Live streaming" the outdoor service, if possible. Due to logistic issues, we anticipate any outdoor gathering (i.e. worship service) will be offered only occasionally. Our main worship format will remain through Zoom solely, or, at some future time, as hybrid services with worshippers joining both on-site in the building and remotely through Zoom.

The vestry will continue their telephone tree, parish members will be encouraged to connect with other parish members, and we will continue to offer a recorded Compline Service

Connections are also maintained through our weekly St. James e-mails.

- We will continue to encourage and invite stewardship by:
  - Reminding every staff and parish member, worshipper and person who uses our space that God loves them, and that we earnestly want to protect their health and the health of those in their household.
  - Requiring anyone who does not feel well, or those who believe they might have been exposed to someone with COVID-19, to stay home.
  - Encouraging everyone to maintain physical distancing, to wear face masks, and to follow proper sanitizing routines, and other practices that decrease the spread of COVID-19.
  - Reminding people of opportunities to donate by using the on-line Tithe.ly account, and mailing in checks.

We will intentionally remind parish members that stewardship is a character of being, not solely donating finances.

We will continue to look for opportunities to incorporate parish members in the life of the church, especially as we move to hybrid services.

We will continue to encourage support of The Country Pantry.

- If someone who has come to one of our outdoor gatherings contracts COVID-19, we will communicate with our congregation and with anyone who may have come into contact with that individual, while upholding that individual's privacy, by:
  - Notifying all people who may have been exposed, and the entire parish, through e-mail (or by telephone for those who do not e-mail.) without revealing the name of the person.
  - Working with the County Health Department on confidentially communicating a confirmed case of someone who has used our building.
- We will communicate diocesan guidelines and the parish's plan for outdoor in-person gatherings to the congregation by:
  - Making both the diocesan guidelines and parish plan available on the parish website.
  - Setting up links to both in the weekly church newsletter.

Congregants who do not have e-mail will be mailed paper copies.

Guidelines specifically related to in-person worship will also be communicated at the start of, or during, the outdoor gathering, as appropriate.

We ask for God's grace and help as we faithfully follow Jesus as a community of love and faith in these difficult times.

Parish and City: St. James' Episcopal Church, Clinton NY

**Signatures:**

*By typing your name and the date below, you are signing this Covenant. This Covenant should be signed by the priest (where applicable) and wardens of your parish. If there is only one warden, please ask a vestry member to sign.*

**Priest:**

**Warden: Signed by Christopher Fox, senior warden**

**Warden: Signed by Wendy Weber, junior wardent**

**Warden:**

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**Date:**

**Date:**

**Date:**

Aug 6, 2020

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