

16 December 2020

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church
2750 Cardinal Dr.
Sierra Vista, AZ 85635

Dear St. Stephen's Family and Friends,

Last night your vestry met to discuss our open/closed status as a worship community. We took a vote and the majority voted for us to continue as we have been doing since September... to remain in Phase II. This means that we will continue to offer Saturday, Sunday, Wednesday in-person worship services that limit the number of attendees to 25 or fewer, with those attending wearing masks, staying socially distant, and using sanitizer. The church will continue to be cleaned after each service.

Because the numbers of infections in our area (along with the rest of the country) are rising higher each day, I spoke to Bishop Reddall last Sunday about the stance of the diocese on whether to drop back to Phase I or remain in Phase II. The Diocese is currently leaving this decision up to each individual church on which way to go. So, your vestry discussed this Tuesday, Dec 15th, presenting both sides of the argument. We decided that our numbers for worship currently are low ... with approximately 10-15 at either service on Saturday or Sunday, and our members are abiding by the protocols to wear masks, remain socially distant, and use hand sanitizer/wash hands, that we would, for now, continue to hold services with people allowed to worship in person.

Should either the Governor or the Mayor mandate a return to Phase I (entirely possible) or should we ourselves determine the danger of infection to have become too perilous to meet in person, we will fall back to Phase I where we will offer only online worship services again. Given that we are now seeing the results of Thanksgiving spread and we have Christmas and New Years in another week or two, the numbers are likely to continue to climb and I suspect we may need to return to Phase I in January.

As has been the case and continues to be the case, each person should evaluate for themselves whether to attend in person or join us online for worship. It is completely understandable that you may choose to remain home as the virus spreads more widely in our community. We ask that you assess your risk for yourselves and make that determination.

No matter where you go in the coming months, church, stores, doctors, etc... please, please, please follow the precautions and wear your masks, stay at least 6 ft apart, sanitize frequently, and if you don't feel well, stay home or see a doctor.

Peace and health be with you,



The Reverend Allison Cornell