

November 2,2020

St. Mary of Zion Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahdo Church (SMZEOTC)

77 High Street, Yonkers, NY 10703

Safety Plan to limited (Phase I) reopening of services

Regular worship service has been closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. St. Mary of Zion Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahdo church (St. Mary EOTC) is considering a partial reopening of services. In preparation for this reopening, the following Safety plan has been prepared. The reopening safety plan incorporates recommendation from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and NYS Department of Health (NYSDOH).

I. Physical distancing

- Everyone (worshippers, volunteers, clergy, employees) are required to remain 6 feet (about 2 meters) apart from each other in every direction at all times.
- Maximum occupancy of the worship space will be in line with the 6 feet separation requirement or by the number of persons allowed by NYSDOH.
- Physical distancing markers using tapes or other signs that show 6 ft spacing will be used
- Separate entrance and exit sites will be designated and clearly marked
- In situations where 6 ft distance cannot be followed, such as during temperature screen, worshipper- clergy interaction, both parties must wear masks and keep the interaction brief
- There will be no handshakes, hugs, high fives, and prolonged loud conversation on the church compound. (Exception: household members living together)

II. Universal masking (except for children < 2 yrs old and those who have trouble breathing)

- Everyone is required to wear face coverings (cloth masks, medical mask, etc...)
- The people in the church will be required to wear masks and remain 6 ft apart in the church compound. Outside of the church people will be required to wear mask if they don't follow the 6 ft separation requirement (with exception of same household members).
- The mask should cover mouth and nose. We have been providing education on proper use of masks (also available on our website) and this will continue as needed.
- Members are expected to have their own masks.
- Mask should meet the minimum requirement for infection prevention
- Signs that inform on the benefits of masks and that show that mask wearing is a state wide requirement will be displayed for all to see
- Regular church service with chanting and singing preaching are not expected during this phase of the re- opening. If ever this unexpected aerosol/droplet generating events occur, masks and 12 feet separation between persons are strongly encouraged.

III. Hand hygiene

- Frequent and proper hand washing (at least 20 seconds) with soap and water and/or use of sanitizer is recommended for all participating in church services. Hand washing stations are ready. Hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol will be strategically placed in convenient locations.

IV. **Environment cleaning**

- Cleaning and disinfecting surfaces, especially those that are frequently touched will be done using EPA approved cleaning agents.
- Cleaning and disinfection will be done at the end of service and more frequently as needed.
- Disinfectant wipes will be available at areas of touched surfaces to complement the scheduled cleaning programs.
- Cleaning schedule with instructions will be posted.

V. **Screening for signs and symptoms suggestive of COVID-19**

- Temperature Checks for all participants. This will be done outside of the entrance of the church. Anyone with a temperature of 38 C(100 F) will be asked to go home
- Symptom screening via questionnaire addressing the following element will be performed by the assigned person:
 1. Fever, cough, and breathing difficulty in the last 7 days
 2. Any contact with anyone with a confirmed/suspected case of covid-19 in the last 7 days
 3. Tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 (Covid-19) in the last 10 days
- Symptom screening may be done by phone or on site (church)

VI. Anyone with a yes answer to one or more of the above questions will be asked to go home for 7-14 days and contact his/her health care provider. **Exposure Management**

- If someone becomes sick with SARS Cov-2 (Covid-19) after attending church services, he or she is required to inform the church leadership and stay home! The local public health law will be followed with regards to information sharing and confidentiality regarding follow up and contact tracing.

VII. **General consideration**

- Exposure to SARS CoV-2 (covid19) can occur anywhere if safety standards are not followed. Therefore the safety standards (physical distancing, masking, hand hygiene and staying home if not well or have contact with covid 19 case) must be followed at all times. Socializing, including hugs, handshakes must be avoided.
- Not more than one person is allowed in tight places such as the 'Holy ' (Mekdes), bathroom
- The 6 feet rule must be followed while waiting on line for temp checks, bathroom, cloak room and worship ritual etc
- Interaction with the priest/deacon must be brief and both parties should wear masks
- Touching and ?sharing of worship materials must be limited to a minimum
- Wearing mask and using hand sanitizer is advised in public transportation

VIII. **The ventilation system**

- Doors and windows will be opened whenever possible to ensure cross circulation with outside air (weather permitting).
- In the short term, portable ventilation equipment maybe used to augment the air circulation
- In the long run, heating and ventilation air conditioning system(HVAC) will be installed to improve the air circulation by maintaining air flow from outside.

IX. Awareness creation and education

- Ever since the start of covid 19 pandemic. St Mary EOTC has been carrying out weekly services virtually to its congregation. The Health committee has been providing regular updates on the state of the covid 19 pandemic. As well as health education and awareness creation in conjunction with the church service. We also provide access to educational material on Covid-19 on the church website. This weekly educational service will continue to provide relevant education to help members protect themselves and others. The church reopening plan incorporates educational activities that strengthen healthy behaviors and reduce the spread of SARS Cov 2 including:
 1. Physical distancing
 2. Hand hygiene
 3. Masking
 4. Cleaning and disinfection
 5. Exposure management

X. Work plan

- Monitoring of compliance with recommendations
 - i. Responsible person(s) assigned
 - ii. Schedule made
- Temperature and symptom screen
 - i. Responsible person(s) assigned
 - ii. Question developed
 - iii. Schedule made
- Exposure management
 - I. Responsible person
 - II. Communication task
- Cleaning and disinfection
 - I. Assign responsible person(s)
 - II. Cleaning and disinfecting with EPA approved agents
 - III. Maintaining adequate supply
- Education
 - I. Responsible- Health Committee
 - II. Schedule and coordinate educational activities
- General Maintenance
 - I. Responsible – Church property manager (Chairperson)
 - II. Receiving and prioritizing maintenance needs
 - III. Posting signs, posters

Supplies:

Thermal scanners- (thermometer).

No touch trash cans.

Portable ventilation equipment,

Masks and gloves- (disposable).

Hand sanitizers, antiseptic wipes, soaps paper towels, Log book or tablet.

Stationaries for questionnaire, educational material, posters,

This draft document is submitted for review and further refinement. The current covid 19 surge is concerning and needs careful monitoring of the situation as it might impact the reopening plan!