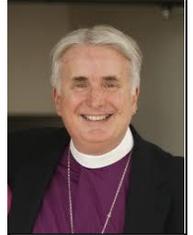




Shield of the Diocese

FORWARD IN FAITH AND NOT FEAR, IN CAUTION AND PREPAREDNESS

The Diocese of Central Florida Guidelines in this season of COVID-19, May 15, 2020



Bishop Gregory
O. Brewer



One reads from the collect for Pentecost, “...on this day you opened the way of eternal life...”, and from the 1st lesson... “When the day of Pentecost had come, the disciples were all together in one place..”

It seems fitting that Pentecost, May 31, 2020, is the day to begin in-person worship and gathering again in our church buildings to... *“continue in the apostle’s teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and in the prayers.” (Acts 2:42)*

Dear Clergy and lay leaders, In the following pages you will find practical guidelines and suggestions from

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| The National Church Guidelines | the Office of the Presiding Bishop |
| Episcopal Relief and Development | the Church Insurance Company, |
| The Center for Disease Control | John Hopkins Center for Health Security |
| The Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation | Federal, State and local guidelines |
| The World Health Organization and policies gleaned from many dioceses around the country. | |

Clergy and lay leaders in each congregation should discern their own comfort level with the scope and pace of the re-opening decisions to be made. Guidance from the Diocese of CFL and National Church suggest a slow, intentional phasing process for all aspects of getting back to what used to be “normal.”

Please do not feel pressured by the announcement to reopen on May 31. If you or your congregation are not ready, WAIT! Each clergy and leadership team must realize that these are critical times demanding prayer, dialog, debate, critical thinking skills and corporate discernment. Bishop Brewer desires to provide reasoned guidance and carefully thought out directions to clarify our path forward.

The Bishop also wants to respect each congregation’s leadership and discernment and understands and accepts that not everyone may be ready, able or willing to re-gather for in-person worship. If clergy and vestry decide to delay in-person worship beyond the permissible Pentecost start date, please let Canon Scott Holcombe know (sholcombe@cfdiocese.org) so that we can maintain accurate records in the Diocesan office of when each congregation will resume Sunday morning worship.

All guidelines in this document pertain only to REOPENING: PHASE ONE.

Should the reopening of the parish for in-person worship be delayed?

- Are **YOU** comfortable with the decision to allow in-person worship open on Pentecost, May 31, 2020?
- Are **YOU** confident that you can have the congregation and leadership ready to function by then?
- Reflecting on the membership of the parish, are **THEY** ready for in-person worship with restrictions?
- **Do you have the necessary supplies** (disposable masks, hand sanitizer, Clorox wipes, disposable gloves , etc.) purchased/ordered?

(All PHASE ONE GUIDELINES start on page 2)

So what do I do first?

1. ORDER SUPPLIES: Likely sources include: amazon.com, Ebay.com, Target.com, Walmart.com or Local Janitorial, restaurant or office supply stores.



Masks



Vinyl gloves



post it notes



Clorox wipes



hand sanitizer

2. DETERMINE WHO IS GOING TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR CLEANING BETWEEN SERVICES/ EVENTS. Make sure that you provide PPE (Proper Protective Equipment) for all volunteers and workers. Make sure that your cleaning supplies are effective against the COVID-19 virus and are used as recommended on cleaning label. A list of CDC approved supplies: <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>



In smaller congregations- schedule and train volunteers

In medium-larger sized congregations- schedule sexton or cleaning service

- Provide a written checklist of what is to be done in each room
- Make sure whoever cleaned the room, they must sign, date and record time completed on the checklist

3. KEEP CLEANING RECORDS

One major difficulty in making sure that church facilities are appropriately cleaned after each use, is determining what spaces/rooms were used and by whom? This is further complicated because persons assigned to clean are seldom present when spaces/rooms are used. An easy way to make sure that this is adequately communicated, is to have neon "post it" note by each main entry door. **If you use a room-mark a room!** Each space/room that is used, should have a post it note placed on the room's entry door, with date, time, reason for use, and 1st person entered (i.e.- Sunday, May 31, 10:00a, Adult Sunday School, John Doe) – This will give cleaning person or crew an idea of what to clean, and how thoroughly! Whoever cleans the room, then signs the slip and files it. (or copy/use the form at right.) Copy on bright colored paper) **Maintain copies of these forms! You will have records should you be required to document the cleaning schedule or trace who was in the room during what days if someone should test positive for COVID-19)**



Sample Room Safety Form

Date: _____

Time: _____

Name of room: _____

Room use: _____

1st person entered: _____

Cleaned by: _____

Date: _____

Time: _____

4. CLEANING GUIDELINES- PREPARING YOUR WORSHIP SPACE FOR RE-ENTRY/ FIRST USE.

- **If your worship space has not been used/occupied for more than 7 days, only routine cleaning is needed.**
- **If worship space has been used within the past 7 days, use Clorox wipes on all hard surfaces before first use.** Volunteers should be protected with PPE before beginning cleaning.
- **Once worship use begins, routinely clean/disinfect all frequently touched surfaces between services and after the final worship service of the day.**
- **Commercial Sterilization or disinfection** are impractical because it only takes one person and one touch to negate their effects.

5. NEW POLICIES TO PUT IN PLACE

- **The Rector and Vestry should establish protocols to deal with persons unwilling to comply with the parish/diocesan guidelines** (i.e. what if someone is unwilling to wear a mask, shakes hands or hugs someone who is not a family member during the Peace, etc.) What will you do? And who will enforce it? Will people be allowed to enter, but must sit in a designated area? Establish policies for “what if...”
- **The use of “No Touch” digital thermometers is discouraged to pre-check those who enter the building.** Recent tests show they suffer from battery fatigue and do not maintain accuracy. Seldom are they used by trained persons.
- **Offering plates should not be passed by ushers.** Place collection plate/box by the altar rail when people come up for communion, or if placed by the entrance doors and assign a warden/usher to supervise and safeguard it.
- **Place a Sanitizing station at each entry door and supply a station with disinfectant wipes and hand sanitizer.** Check with your local Janitorial Supply for Hand Sanitizer dispensers. They will normally give you the dispenser when you buy a case of the replacement bags. Place one in every foyer, bathroom, fellowship hall and preschool rooms.
- **Consider removing all non-essential items** from the rooms so that there are fewer surfaces to clean (i.e. if you have 100 chairs and tables for 100 in the nave/parish hall- remove ½ so you can monitor attendance and minimize cleaning between services.
- **Post Information signs about non-contact greetings and refraining from shaking hands or hugging.**

- **Communicate with congregation members** that if they are sick, at high risk, exhibit any of the warning signs of COVID-19 or are under the weather in any way- they should stay home and join the worship online instead.
- **Communicate with the congregation to let them know what you have done to prepare for their arrival.** Create a climate of careful preparation and visible, conscientious cleaning to assure people that it is safe to come to church. Let them know to bring their masks, but you are prepared with extras. Let folks know your cleaning schedule!



6. POLICIES TO PUT IN PLACE DURING THE WORSHIP SERVICE

- **Soloists, duets, and small ensembles are permissible with 12' distancing in the choir area. Singers are to maintain 12' social distancing when seated, standing or singing.**



toonclips.com #11271 service@toonclips.com

- **Maintain safe practices:** Worshippers shall maintain 6' social distancing, practice frequent handwashing, and use cloth face coverings or masks, unless you are wearing a wireless microphone.
- **Masks are to be worn at all times by all laity while indoors for fellowship or worship.** The Lector may remove their mask during the time that Scripture is being read. Individuals may remove their mask when receiving communion.
- The current CDC guideline is that **children under two years should not wear face coverings/masks.**
- **Masks for children over two:** the decision to mask or not should be left up to the parent(s). Adolescents should be masked if a suitable sized mask can be found.
- **Limit sharing of common spaces and frequently touched objects:** tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, pew ends, desks, phones, computer and musical keyboards, toilets, flushing handles, faucets and sinks
- **Supply congregants with alcohol-based hand sanitizer** (at least 60% alcohol content) to use before entering the worship space and/or participating in Communion. Place small bottles of hand sanitizer in pew racks, if possible.
- **Discourage congregants from holding or shaking hands or laying hands on others** (even for prayer) at any point during services.

- **Offer cautionary reminders during the service about changes to usual procedures** (such as not holding hands at prayer time.)



7. HOLY COMMUNION POLICIES:

- **We will continue to offer communion in one kind (the bread/wafers only). The wafers may be pre-prepared with a small amount of wine and then left to dry before consecration. There shall be no use of a chalice/common cup during Phase One. It is permissible to administer communion in one kind only** (look up “concomitance” in a dictionary)
- **Multiple services may be going on at the same time.** A service can be going on in the church nave, others may be watching on a TV screen or monitor remotely or via zoom in the parish hall, and even a 3rd group watching in a possible large meeting space. Large churches should be creative as they contemplate how to observe social distancing and minimize the number of Sunday morning services.
- **Maintain maximum of 50 persons or less in attendance per service *** (including clergy and altar party). Large ASA churches may have to assign people to attend certain services (i.e. 8:00a is for people whose last names begin with A-L...) *Unless otherwise permitted by your local government.
- **You may need to add to/or adjust your Sunday schedule to add additional services to accommodate expected Sunday Attendance!**
- **Your average worship service may need to be shortened** to include multiple services on Sundays to maintain the 25% occupancy, not exceeding 50 persons per room.
- **The time interval between services may need to be adjusted** to allow for proper cleaning and sanitizing between services.
- **Maximum attendance for mid-week services will be restricted to the same attendance guidelines: less than 50.**
- **Block off alternating pews** (or remove some chancel chairs) to maintain social distancing of 6'- instead of skipping a pew, consider the following pattern : 2 per row by the pew ends, next pew- one in the center, repeat.
- **At the Exchange of the Peace** there will be touch-free greetings with no shaking hands and no hugging. Clergy and lay leaders in worship should model a wave or a bow while staying in place. Some congregants text others (at the service or elsewhere) at the exchange of the Peace.

- **The Celebrant is authorized to remove their mask at select times such as during the sermon, the Eucharistic celebration, and the final blessing.** The rest of the time (including at the distribution of communion) the celebrant should be wearing a mask.
- **Clergy are encouraged to wash their hands with soap and water in a large basin before the Eucharist,** in clear sight of the congregation, if possible.
- **When possible, print and use disposable** service leaflets and do not reuse these bulletins or newsletters if they have been previously handed out at an earlier service and returned.
- **Project the contents of the worship service on a screen whenever possible. Remove all service books, BCP, Bibles, Hymnals from the pews.**
- **At the end of the dismissal, direct, communicate, and control how people will leave their pews or rows of chairs.** Consider dismissing people like during a formal wedding, except dismiss from the back. This will discourage people stopping to say hi to people as they depart down the central aisle. This is a significant time of concern for maintaining safe social distancing. 
- **Clergy must maintain social distancing and wear a mask at the back door during the departure of the congregation.** You may be tempted to hug or shake hands with people as they depart church, but this should not occur. Clergy must not send a mixed message to the congregation about physical contact.
- **For social tracing purposes, a record of those attending worship should be maintained.** If your worship services are live-streamed, have the camera pan/sweep the in-person congregation to welcome those joining the service at home. This is an easy way to recall those present if these digital records are kept. This recorded information should be available only to the Health Department for social tracing after a COVID-19 positive event!

8. OFFICE POLICIES

- **Church offices may be open if there is sufficient space for social distancing.** During phase one there should be no more than 1 person per 300 square feet. Staff and employees may return to the church office if:
 - a log of guests is maintained
 - Cleaning and wiping down of high risk surfaces is done at each day's end
 - Masks are used when multiple
 - persons are using the same office space
- **Clergy only Pastoral visitations may begin** on a limited basis to parishioners (with the exception that there should be no exposure of clergy to persons who have tested positive for COVID-19.) Two negative test results are required to feel confident that the danger is past.

- **There should be no lay pastoral visits, Stephen's ministers or LEV (lay eucharistic visits) during Phase One.**
- **Phases of re-opening have no set timing or schedule.** Phase timing will be determined by the Bishop in consultation with medical, legal and governmental professionals based on the progression of the COVID-19 virus.



9. TRACKING VISITORS IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER!

Make sure that you have names, contact information, email and phone numbers for all visitors and guests. What if someone in your worship service, Sunday School Class, or meeting tests positive? If good attendance records are not kept you will have no way of contacting them or welcoming them to your church!



10. WHAT ABOUT COFFEE HOUR?

Many churches have invested serious dollars in creating a coffee shop experience. Is that a good idea anymore? Tables and chairs may need to be placed in storage so that people maintain social distancing and don't congregate within a couple of feet of one another. **Consider a coffee hour that does not include serving any food or beverages.**

11. THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC HAS PUT A HUGE STRAIN ON THE FAMILY

BUDGET OF SO MANY. People who have never been to a Food Pantry now make regular visits. As a result many new Food Pantries have opened to try to meet the desperate needs. Unfortunately, this places novice volunteers in vulnerable positions.

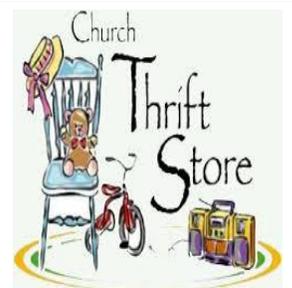


Guidelines for Food Pantries:

- Volunteers must wear masks and gloves at all times, whether packing, carrying or delivering food bags or boxes.
- Volunteers should greet clients outside of the facility, determine their needs, and only the volunteer is allowed inside the Church building to get the food. Clients are not permitted within the church edifice.
- If at all possible, masks should be provided to clients for the communication and food exchange.
- Hand sanitizer should be used before and after each client.

12: CHURCH THRIFT SHOPS POSE SIGNIFICANT RISKS AT THIS TIME AND SHOULD REMAIN CLOSED DURING PHASE ONE.

The labor required to clean all donated items, monitor each guest and ensure that all items are disinfected or sanitized is virtually impossible in this season of COVID-19. This cleaning and sorting put many elderly volunteers at significant risk. This is an especially difficult decision because many Thrift Shops provide needed outreach funding and support for missionaries and outreach ministries!



13. CHILDRENS MINISTRY in the season of COVID-19 asks more questions than can be dealt with in this brief communication. How willing will parents be to entrust their child(ren) (of whatever age) to a youth worker, Sunday School teacher, VBS coordinator, or Church camp staff? Each clergy, vestry, and children's ministry must discern what steps they are willing to take in the weeks and months ahead. Whatever is imagined, this is definitely the time to think outside of the proverbial box. Consider having VBS postponed until early August, and have it 1 night a week for 5 weeks in a row. Consider providing educational materials for parents to teach their children at home instead of at church. It is imperative that church leaders communicate to parents that all that can be done is being done to keep their children safe. Any crayons or activity pages that are prepared for children during church should be in Zip-lock bags and given to the child to take home. If these coloring packs are given out they should not be reused or recycled.



Nursery



The Sacraments



14. BAPTISMS, FUNERALS, ORDINATIONS, etc. will be limited to no more than 50 persons, this includes family, clergy, and all guests. There shall be no receptions at any of these events. Social distancing of 6' is to be continued. Masks are required for all present.



15. MEETINGS AND OUTSIDE GROUPS, like AA, NA, AL anon, etc., may return but they must abide by gathering limits, social distancing protocols, must wear face masks and be responsible for doing their own cleaning at the end of their gathering. It is recommended that outside groups sign a statement of compliance with parish and diocesan COVID 19 policies.

16. TECHNOLOGY



Do you have the equipment that you need to continue with quality, professional looking, online worship? Now may be the time to invest in some new equipment/technology for the long haul! All computers, keyboards, cameras, microphones, iPad, tablets, etc., should be cleaned after each use. Whenever possible congregations with multiple wireless microphones- each device should be numbered and used by the same individual week after week. Clorox wipes may be wrung out to nearly dry and used to wipe and sanitize keyboards and digital screens.

Decisions should be made by clergy and vestry about whether you will continue with online worship for those unable or unwilling to return to in-person worship. Plans should also be made so that the set-up and operation of the technology should not rest solely on the shoulders of the clergy. This may be the time to launch a Tech Team and train them to continue what has been started by Sunday Facebook posts and using similar online digital technology. If additional equipment is needed, make sure that you speak to others about what equipment you really need!

17. Important websites for further study and easy reference

CDC guidelines for cleaning and disinfecting your facility	https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html
Federal guidelines for re-opening may be found	https://www.whitehouse.gov/openingamerica/
Guidance for child care centers	https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/guidance-for-childcare.html
Guidance for Administrators of K-12 Schools and Child care programs	https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/guidance-for-schools.html
State of Florida guidelines	State of Florida Dept of Health call center (open 24 hrs.) 1-866-779-6121 or COVID-19@flhealth.gov.
Episcopal Relief & Development COVID-19 information	https://www.episcopalrelief.org/press-resources/press-releases/2020-press-releases/episcopal-relief-development-responds-to-the-covid-19-pandemic/

Recommended resources:

- Badger Bounce Back, WI Department of Health Services. •Coronavirus: Safety Tips for Religious Organizations. Church Pension Group.
- Why Getting the US Back to Normal in the Next Couple Months is a Fantasy. PBS NewsHour, April 20, 2020.
- The Coronavirus in America: The Year Ahead. New York Times, April 18, 2020.
- COVID-19: Now I understand King’s truth of the ‘inescapable web of mutuality’, Zachary Helton, Baptist News Global, April 21, 2020. •Church in these “VUCA” Times. Jake Morrill.
- 24 Questions Your Church Should Ask Before People Return. Ken Braddy, Jr.
- The Four Spaces of Belonging.
- Leaders, It’s Time to Ask Critical Questions About the Post-COVID19 Church. John Thornburg, United Methodist Insight, April 14, 2020. •Distributed Church. Fresh Expressions.
- How to Seize this Moment for Your Church. Ed Stetzer.
- The Employer’s Guide to COVID-19. Neckerman Insurance Services. •Reopening a Business After the Coronavirus Shutdown. Neckerman Insurance Services.
- Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility.
- Ten Steps All Workplaces Can Take to Reduce Risk of Exposure to Coronavirus. OSHA

If a question arises that is not answered in these pages, or if you have any specific questions or concerns about any of these published guidelines for resuming in-person worship, please contact: The Rev. Canon Scott Holcombe, Canon to the Ordinary, Diocese of Central Florida
at sholcombe@cfdiocese.org or 321-525-2366.

Additional guidelines will be provided in the coming weeks and months as we move through this re-entry phased process.



18. WHAT DO WE DO IF SOMEONE GETS SICK OR TESTS COVID-19 POSITIVE?

- If you, or others you know, develop COVID-19 symptoms, notify the clergy immediately! Notify your local Health Department (this is required)
- Seek medical attention to confirm/deny COVID-19 exposure or positive test.
- Determine date and time of most recent visit to the church or other public spaces.
- Check records/digital records to determine who else may have been exposed.
- The chart below is taken from CDC Guidelines that dictates steps to follow if someone who is COVID-19 Positive has attended a recent worship service or meeting that was held within your facility.
- IF there is a confirmed case of COVID-19, or if someone who has tested positive comes into your congregation:
 - **Continue to offer prayers for the sick**, and ask any ill congregants (and family members) to stay home from services and other gatherings—even if their symptoms do not match COVID-19 symptoms, which include fever, cough, and shortness of breath.

