

*If you have questions on this, please contact the Rev. Canon Toneh Smyth,
tsmyth@diopa.org*

“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid, do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go”

~Joshua 1:9

Although most if not all of us have the option to stay indoors, stock up on food and supplies. However, there are far too many people where this is not an option. We have brothers and sisters who depend on the community to help them fulfill some basic physiological needs (food, water, clothing, etc).

There are ways to continue your outreach ministries while keeping yourselves, volunteers, and those you serve safe. Per Secretary of Health Dr. Rachel Levine, will not be penalized and programs that provide life sustaining services may continue by following guidelines. Here are facts on preventing the spread of COVID-19:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/prevention.html>,
<https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Pages/Stop-the-Spread.aspx>

I. VOLUNTEERS:

- Those considered high risk should refrain from in person volunteer work. They can contribute by leaving donations outside their front door for pick up or providing a financial contribution for the ministry online
- Schedule volunteers in shifts (e.g. small group to pick up donations, group to prepare the day before, group to help coordinate day of, etc). Keep these groups to bare minimum (no more than 5- if possible)
- Volunteers working in one area should adhere to the 6 foot physical distance rule
- Anyone who shows symptoms of illness (even if it is deemed a cold) should stay home
- No one should enter homes or places of mass gatherings to pick up donations
- Gloves should be worn at all times. If volunteers are handling food (face masks should be worn)

II. MEAL/CLOTHING/NECESSITY PREPARATION

- The preference is to obtain pre-packaged food versus assembling food. Places such as WAWA frequently donate mass quantities of prepackaged sandwiches. If this is not possible meals should be assembled by volunteers as suggested under section I
- Avoid food being prepped within personal homes.
- Try to alter meals that require minimal prep work. Examples (but certainly not limited to) pasta, provide mayo/mustard packets for sandwiches in to go boxes, fruits, prepackaged vegetables, etc....
- Wear gloves at all times. If you are handling food, wear a face mask
 - If your parish is need of face masks please contact Canon Smyth OR visit <https://www.deaconess.com/How-to-make-a-Face-Mask>

III. **PROVIDING SERVICES:** Any form of program that results in mass gatherings (e.g. people sitting to eat, standing in line, fellowship in groups) should be discontinued until further notice. Here are some alternative ideas:

- a. Signage and communication to volunteers should clearly indicate the rules: “no congregating in one place, keep a 6 foot distance from one another, only 2 volunteers at a table, one item per person, etc. The language may be far from fellowship nurturing but during these times the safety of each person takes precedence.
- b. Place tables with bagged/boxed meals on multiple tables (outside if possible) spaced out. This will help keep people from crowding one table
 - People should be encouraged to take items themselves from tables
 - Keep hand sanitizer at each table
- c. Schedule times for people to pick up items.
 - You can request people to contact the parish to schedule a time slot to pick up items. Guests can still take items from the table/area when they arrive verses being handed the item.
 - Or you can communicate “items will be available to take at these times”.
- d. If you do drive up meals:
 - Guests can take items from tables then return vehicles. If your location makes this difficult, you can place lunches in a large bin (such as a dish) and have each vehicle take from bin. This will allow volunteers to keep safe distance

IV. **SUPPORT AVAILABLE:**

- a. A.A. programs: virtual and conference lines are being offered
aasepia.org
- b. Crisis Line: 215 -685- 6400 DBHID
 - o Need financial support for program?: Apply at
www.phlccovid19fund.org
 - Your parish must be a registered 501c3 organization
 - If you are not registered, consider partnering with one
- c. Food Distribution sites near you:
 - <https://www.hungerfreepa.org/>
 - Bucks County Opportunity Council: <https://www.bcoc.org/>
 - Helping Harvest (Berks and Schuylkill counties)<https://helpingharvest.org/>
 - Find free meals for students while schools are closed:
<https://www.phila.gov/2020-03-14-find-free-meals-and-safe-spaces-for-students-while-schools-are-closed/>

V. OPTIONS OUTSIDE OF PROVIDING DIRECT SERVICE:

- a. If you have a relationship with your local police department who conduct welfare visits, they may also be willing to take meals/kits with them.
- b. Contact the social work department for hospitals as they may have families in need of items where they can help disperse for you
- c. Attached are a list of programs that are in need of items due to the shortage of donations and places you can refer guests to if they need help.