

## Answers to Clergy Questions

Dear Friends in Christ,

Since we first released the Plan for Re-Entry on May 12<sup>th</sup>, you have raised a number of excellent questions. We hope you will find these answers helpful as you begin to consider when and how to re-engage with in-person activity.

### **Can I have more than one 25-person concurrent gathering on my church campus?**

Multiple independent gatherings of up to 25 people are permitted on the campus so long as there is a plan to manage the ingress, egress and other possible places which might lead people to gather unsafely at bathrooms or in parking lots.

### **What about elevators and chair lifts?**

It is recommended that only members of households use an elevator together. Masks should continue to be worn while using the elevator/lift by everyone, even if from the same household. A sanitizing station should be placed at all entry points (with a container of disinfecting wipes). Those who use the elevator/lift should be instructed to use the wipes to sanitize buttons at the entry point, to use the wipes to press buttons inside the elevator and to wipe down any bars or handles they may touch upon exiting. We also suggest placing signs on the elevator that only one family or a person use the elevator at a time.

### **Do I need to check with my insurance company?**

So long as you follow the Diocesan Plan, there should be no additional requirements from your insurer

**Can we offer cloth masks instead of disposable ones?** Cloth masks may also be offered in addition to or instead of disposable ones so long as they conform to one of the recommended styles. However, if a cloth mask is given, it should not be recollected but kept by the recipient. Additional information on masks can be found [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#)

### **Is it really safe to resume pastoral visits?**

While pastoral and eucharistic visitation is permitted in Phase II (p.7), it is critical to understand that any in-person contact carries with it the risk of transmission. This applies both to the person(s) visited and to the visitor. Therefore, the safest option is always to visit virtually or by phone. However, as the Church we recognize that circumstances may arise that necessitate an in-person visit. In those cases, maximum caution and care should be used.

Observing all precautions (masks, hand washing, distance, etc.) will mitigate some of the risk. In addition, prior to visiting, all clergy and LEM's should monitor their health, including checking their temperature on the day of the visit. If they are running an elevated temperature, are displaying a cough, having difficulty breathing, or are otherwise not feeling well, they should not go. Visiting ministers may wish to get tested for COVID19 which can now be done even when asymptomatic. However, unless they are prepared to do this prior each time they go out for a visit, a single test is of limited value.

If the Eucharist is offered, it must follow the protocols as presented on page 15.

### **What precautions should the altar guild take?**

The altar guild, and anyone else involved with the preparation of the altar, should wear a mask and thoroughly wash their hands prior to beginning their work. The same applies to the cleaning of vessels, etc. after the service.

### **What about Pre-Schools and Camps?**

While the Plan temporarily suspends in-person activities for children and youth (under 18), this applies only to those activities and ministries run directly by the church. This would include Sunday school, children's chapel, Vacation Bible School, etc. However, it does not apply to child care, preschools or schools located on the church property or otherwise affiliated with the church. It would also not apply to any summer camps run by those organizations.

All such schools, whether they are an independent tenant or run by the church, can only resume operations if they are in accordance with all regulations set by state and local government agencies (such as the Office of Early Childhood Development, Department of Human Services and the PA Department of Education) and any relevant professional associations.

Prior to resuming in-person activity, the school should coordinate with the church to confirm that they have the capacity to run their program in accordance with both the above regulations and CDC recommendations which can be found [here](#). Church leadership (vestry and clergy) must confirm the school's readiness and make a formal decision before they are allowed to resume.

Both the school and church should also consult the following pages and accompanying decision tools from the CDC for [Child Care/Preschool \(Child Care Tool\)](#), [Schools \(School Tool\)](#) and [Summer Camp \(Summer Camp Tool\)](#). If the school needs to clarify their liability, they should consult with their attorney and/or check with their insurance company.

It is also important that church and school coordinate around shared space, staff and any other shared resources. For example, if the school relies on custodial or administrative staff that they share with the church, will those personnel be back to work? Likewise, if the school uses a corridor, bathroom or other common area that the church might use later that evening, you would collectively need to agree upon a way to ensure that the area is cleaned and disinfected after school is done and then again, after the church activity is done that night.

### **Can the Diocese help us the cleaning supplies we need?**

The Offices have ordered a large supply of hand sanitizer which we will make available to churches at our cost of \$45/gallon. If a church cannot afford this, we will cover the costs. This is a liquid and not a gel like Purell and so a little goes a long way. You will need small spray bottles to use it and we can direct you to an inexpensive version. There is an initial limit of 1 gallon per church. We are confident we can continue to get resupplied as needed so you can get more as you run out. Once it has been delivered in early June an announcement will be made and arrangements can be made to come pick it up from the Diocesan Center.

Most other supplies such as spray bottles for the sanitizer, disinfectant, masks and gloves can again be found online through places like Amazon. If you have trouble locating a particular supply, please contact Canon Doug Horner ([dhorner@diopa.org](mailto:dhorner@diopa.org)).

You also have the option of making your own in accordance with the CDC's formula which can be found [here](#). Should you choose this option you must follow all of their instructions and ensure that when creating the solution that you do so in a well-ventilated area.

**Do you know of any companies who can clean and disinfect churches?**

We have identified two companies which can disinfect your space via a fogging method. We will be sharing specifics on them soon. Please note, such a process does not preclude the need for thorough cleaning before the resuming of in-person worship or other cleaning as situationally needed or otherwise specified in the Plan.

**Is it safe to run fans and air conditioning?**

In fact, the CDC recommends that more ventilation is better so you should in fact open windows and run fans and air conditioners. More on that can be found [here](#).

**Is there any way the Church Pension Fund can adjust assessments so that my HAC is protected?**

Canon Doug Horner is currently looking into this. Please contact him if you have specific questions ([dhorner@diopa.org](mailto:dhorner@diopa.org))

**Under Phase I, are volunteers permitted to come to the church assist with essential tasks?**

Until we enter Phase II, up to ten people may gather to attend to essential functions like maintenance and cleaning. They should abide by all precautions (distancing, masks, handwashing, etc.) at all times while on the property. Once the work is accomplished, they should leave the property as quickly as possible.