



**The Episcopal Diocese of Central Florida  
JANUARY 2021 COVID GUIDELINES  
(Effective 1/11/21)**

**IT IS TIME FOR US TO SHIFT TO THE FOLLOWING GUIDELINES:**

- The church must provide additional masks, sanitizing gel or wipes.
- Sanitizing stations should be located near all main entrances/exits.
- The church must be thoroughly cleaned between church services.
- Social tracing records must be accurately kept for social tracing and notification in case someone tests positive.
- Prayer Books, Hymnals and service books may not be used until further notice.
- Screen projection and single-use pamphlets may still be used.
- Regularly sanitize frequently touched objects: tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, pew ends, desks, phones, computer and musical keyboards, toilets, flushing handles, faucets and sinks. Please make sure that you are using COVID-19 approved cleaning/disinfecting supplies. For a list go to <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cleaning-disinfection.html>
- Maintain 6' social distancing and block off every other pew/row.
- 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 wedding, except dismiss from the back. This discourages people from stopping to greet others as they depart the central aisle. This is a significant time of concern for maintaining safe social distancing.
- No exchange of the peace or passing of collection plates.
- If you prepare coloring pages, books, or provide crayons and colored pencils, these should be single use and not collected and reused.
- All computers, keyboards, cameras, microphones, iPads, tablets, etc., should be cleaned after each use. Whenever possible, for 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.
- Clergy will remain masked at all times in public worship, including when preaching, celebrating, etc.

- Clergy are to wear disposable gloves from the offertory sentence through the ablutions at the end of the Eucharist.
- No choirs. You may have a soloist, duet or ensemble of no more than 4 persons who may lead congregational singing. They must remain masked and observe 12' social distancing during any singing. The congregation may sing but must be masked during their singing.
- No LEV, LEM or private communions delivered by lay persons are permitted. There should be no official lay visitations.
- Clergy should restrict visitations to last rites and extreme pastoral needs.
- Church occupancy will be limited to 25% of fire code occupancy.
- It is suggested that clergy take communion out from the chancel to all those seated in the pews/chairs and remain socially distanced in the congregation rather than having people come up to the altar rail to receive communion. Most congregations have had difficulty maintaining social distancing when people are lined up for communion!
- Church offices, parish halls and public spaces are limited to parishioners only. No outside groups may use facilities while January 2021 guidelines are in effect.
- There can be no food or beverage service of any kind.
- There can be no receptions (wedding, funeral or after church).
- Food pantries and Thrift Shops may remain open on the following conditions:
  - All volunteers and all recipients must remain masked during the delivery of food items or while shopping.
  - The exchange of food items must be outside of church buildings (i.e., in a parking lot or drive up).
  - Volunteers should be gloved and change gloves often.
- No church school, youth groups or social groups larger than 10 are permitted to meet.
- We will remain with these guidelines until the number of COVID-19-positive cases reduces dramatically.

## **POSITIVE COVID-19 TEST REPORTS**

Only Brevard (3 of last 7), Citrus (5 of last 7), Highlands (6 of last 7) and Volusia (4 of last 7) counties remain in the COVID under 10% category for the previous 7 days.

Seminole (8 of 9) and Sumter (10 of 11) barely squeak by with the following:

- Seminole reported 9.54% on January 1.
- Sumter reported 8.19% on January 1.
- Otherwise, they would exceed the 10% positive cases.

ALL OTHER COUNTIES IN OUR DIOCESE EXCEED 7 consecutive days out of 7 with 10% or higher cases reported. This includes HARDEE, HIGHLANDS, INDIAN RIVER, LAKE, MARION, OKEECHOBEE, ORANGE, OSCEOLA, POLK and ST. LUCIE.

THE SCORES FOR ALL DIOCESE OF CENTRAL FLORIDA COUNTIES ON JANUARY 5 EXCEED 10% - THE RANGE IS FROM A LOW OF 10.86% IN BREVARD TO A HIGH OF 36.67% IN OKEECHOBEE.

Each Rector (Interim or Priest in Charge) and Vestry must decide their own level of comfort and risk tolerance. Within certain guidelines, Bishop Brewer wishes to allow the leadership in each church to determine what is best for them. We do not want to be overly restrictive, nor laissez-faire in our response to this pandemic. The COVID-19 virus still poses significant health risks, especially to those with pre-existing health conditions, those with a compromised immune system, the elderly and those with respiratory issues. When in doubt, encourage your members to heed the advice of their medical professionals! These new guidelines represent the minimum standards for our response to fighting COVID-19 in our churches. Clergy or vestries may add to these guidelines, but you are not permitted to reduce or eliminate any of them without permission from Canon Holcombe. **If you have any specific questions about COVID-19 cases, decisions for closure, or guidance, please contact Canon Scott Holcombe, 321-525-2366 or email him at [sholcombe@cfdiocese.org](mailto:sholcombe@cfdiocese.org).**