



**The Episcopal Diocese of Central Florida
GENERAL COVID GUIDELINES
(Effective 4/15/21)**

The Center for Disease Control has released several reports in the last week that have significantly modified the diocesan COVID protocols. Please note that major changes in diocesan COVID protocols are highlighted in **red**.

From the April 5, 2021 CDC Report

People can be infected with SARS-CoV-2 through contact with surfaces. However, based on available epidemiological data and studies of environmental transmission factors:

- *Surface transmission is not the main route by which SARS-CoV-2 spreads, and the risk is considered to be low.*
- The principal mode by which people are infected with SARS-CoV-2 is through exposure to respiratory droplets carrying infectious virus.
- In most situations, cleaning surfaces using soap or detergent, and not disinfecting, is enough to reduce risk.
- Disinfection is recommended in indoor community settings where there has been a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 within the last 24 hours.
- The risk of fomite transmission can be reduced by wearing masks consistently and correctly, practicing hand hygiene, cleaning, and taking other measures to maintain healthy facilities.

Notes for All	General Guidelines for Churches With NO Positive Cases	General Guidelines for Churches WITH Positive Cases
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mask use is still required for all 16 years or older. Even if people have had the COVID-19 vaccine, they must still wear a mask. • Social tracking is still required in the case of a positive exposure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sanitizing is no longer required, just clean thoroughly and regularly. • Indoors, use well-ventilated spaces whenever possible. • Encourage washing hands and using hand sanitizer whenever possible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If a COVID-positive person has come into your nave, office, or parish hall and remained for 15 minutes or more, turn off ventilation, then wait 24 hours before thorough cleaning with PPE. After cleaning do not enter or use the contaminated space for the next 72 hours.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mask use for persons under 16 years old will be determined by their parent/guardian. • Full effectiveness of vaccination often takes two weeks after final dose. • The enforcement policy of these provisions will be determined by the rector and vestry. • These guidelines may be enforced on a stricter regulatory basis but may not be relaxed without approval from Canon to the Ordinary Scott Holcombe (sholcombe@cfdiocese.org or 321-525-2366). • Outside worship services do not require mask use by the congregation, only by the celebrant during consecration and distribution of communion. Social distancing by all is to be observed outside as well. • Sunday school, youth groups, and camps may meet as long as social distancing is observed. • Please encourage outdoor settings whenever possible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you had a first-hand exposure (you were in direct contact with a person who tested positive) or second-hand exposure (you were in contact with someone who was in contact with someone who tested positive) you still must self-quarantine until four days after exposure. After four days you should have a COVID-19 test. • You must remain in self-quarantine until you have a negative COVID-19 test and medical professionals confirm that you are no longer at risk of being a carrier/spreader. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notify persons who were present at the worship service or class where they were possibly exposed to someone with COVID-19 and recommend that they get a COVID-19 test. • Change all air filters regularly.
<p>General Worship Guidelines</p>	<p>Notes Specifically for Clergy</p>	<p>Eucharistic Matters</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since surface transmission risk is remote (1 in 10,000), prayer books, hymnals, and Bibles may be put back in pews for use. • Social distancing of non-family groups with a combination of vaccinated and non-vaccinated persons shall remain at 6’. • Occupancy may be up to 50% of fire code building/room 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clergy must continue to wear a mask when celebrating the Eucharist from the Sursum Corda through the ablutions. • LEV, LEM, or private communions may be delivered by masked lay persons and are now permitted. The visitor should request masks be worn by the recipients (if medically possible). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The chalice is not to be offered to any members of the congregation <i>in any form</i>. Only the celebrant may drink/intinct from the chalice. • Intinction is not permitted except by the celebrant at the end of communion. • Small tongs/forceps may be used by the celebrant in place of, or in addition to, disposable

<p>capacity as long as 6' social distancing is still observed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clergy/laity when preaching/reading at the lectern/pulpit may remove their mask while at the pulpit/lectern if there are no persons within 12' of the preacher/reader. • No exchange of the peace. • No passing of collection plates. • People may depart normally at the end of the dismissal, no need to direct or control how people will leave their pews or rows of chairs. • If you prepare coloring pages, books, or provide crayons and colored pencils, these should be single use and not collected and reused. • Leftover bulletins may be reused by later service attendees. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clergy may resume normal visitations for pastoral care and for pastoral needs. • If clergy choose not to wear gloves, the clergy hands must be washed with antibacterial soap before and after the distribution of communion and hand sanitizer used before and after distribution. • Any laying on hands should be preceded and followed by hand sanitizing as soon as practicable after touching. 	<p>gloves for the distribution of communion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The celebrant should receive communion LAST, immediately before the ablutions. • 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.
<p style="text-align: center;">Choirs</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Food Service</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Beverage Service</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choirs may resume. • The organist/choirmaster will be responsible to make sure all those singing have shown proof of vaccination. 6' spacing and mask guidelines remain for vaccinated singers. • If there are unvaccinated choir persons, they must remain at 12' distance when performing and must wear masks during the service. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modified Food Service: The safest food service is individually packaged items, but this is not always possible. Food service is permitted if food items are placed on small individual plates that may be picked up from a serving table. There are to be no buffet lines or servers serving from large pots or trays, and single-use disposable plates and flatware are to be used. Encourage people to eat outside if at all possible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beverages in punch bowls or open containers may not be used. Any delivery of beverages should be by vaccinated persons to minimize exposure risks. Single-serve beverages are still best for large group use.

Cleaning, Sanitizing, Disinfecting

- The church still must provide disposable masks and hand sanitizer.
- **The church should be cleaned (not disinfected or sanitized) between church services.**
- Social tracing records still must be accurately kept for tracking and notification in case someone tests positive.
- It is still a good idea to regularly disinfect 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 of approved cleaning supplies go to <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cleaning-disinfection.html>
- Don't fall for the next and latest gadget unless you know how to properly use it and it is effective.

Food Pantries & Thrift Shops

- Food pantries and thrift shops may remain open on the following conditions:
 - All volunteers and all recipients must remain masked during the delivery of bulk food items or while shopping.
 - The exchange of bulk 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.

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. The diocesan leadership does not want to be overly restrictive, nor laissez-faire in 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 protocols represent the minimum standards for our response to safeguarding against COVID-19 in our churches.

If you have any specific questions about COVID-19 cases, decisions for closure, or guidance, please contact Canon Scott Holcombe at 321-525-2366, or email him at sholcombe@cfdiocese.org.