



## **Episcopal Diocese of Easton**

Welcome All | Share Jesus' Love | Serve the World

# **Protocols and Guidelines for Resumption of In-Person Worship**

*For Clergy and Vestries in the Episcopal Church on the Eastern Shore of Maryland*



*Commissioned*

**Season of Pentecost**

**June 2020**



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# Protocols and Guidelines for Resumption of In-Person Worship

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## A Letter from Bishop San

The Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church, the Most Rev. Michael B. Curry reminded the church that, “as our seasons of life in the COVID-19 world continue to turn, we are called to continue to be creative, to risk, to love. We are called to ask, what would unselfish, sacrificial love do?” The Diocese of Easton identifies as a ‘Prayer Centered Church & Mission-Shaped Diocese’ with the purpose of ‘Welcome All + Share Jesus’ Love + Serve the World’. In the spirit of our diocesan ethos and call to ministry, we have committed in this time of global and national pandemic to ensure the safety and public welfare of God’ beloved within the sacred covenant of love.

God’s love is what defines and distinguishes us as a responsible and caring community of faith on the eastern shore. In demonstration of this ideal our churches, as with others across the world, have engaged the creative use of technology and social media platforms to minister to God’s beloved under our care. We give thanks for the availability of this resource which is providing yeoman service in a variety of forms. Our resilience in faith, strength of will and deep devotion to God are the hallmarks that are sustaining us.

As churches across the State of Maryland have been given permission by state and local authorities to resume a phased in approach to in-person physical regathering, it is the moral and legal obligation of our diocese to commence this process with careful and meticulous attention. We do so cognizant of our pastoral responsibility, paying extremely careful attention to the health and safety of our congregations. Vigilance and preservation of health and well-being are paramount. We will begin the next phase of regathering with “significantly-limited attendees.” The State of Maryland has issued guidelines on the limit of persons allowed at outdoor and indoor gatherings. These restrictions are complemented by guidelines developed by the **Diocesan COVID-19 Pandemic Preparedness and Response Task Force**. The Guidelines/Protocols will guide each worshipping community to come back together in responsible ways that honor congregations and their needs.

Some churches in the diocese will be able to move more quickly than others. Some congregations will be able to regather sooner than others. Some will not feel comfortable regathering until August or even later. When the leadership of your congregation does decide it is ready to move forward, it is required to observe the procedures as outlined in the *Diocesan Guidelines/Protocols*.

We are working together to move our diocese forward in a healthy and safe way for all our members. I share with you these watchwords borrowed from fellow dioceses: **Stay Calm. Stay Connected. Stay Church. Take Care of Each Other.**

May our Lord Jesus love and walk together with us! As we plan for our shared future, we seek to create a safe space for encounters with Jesus Christ. We long and hope to be good news within the communities that we serve.

*This Pentecost, we pray for wisdom, we pray for creativity, and we pray for pragmatism as we discern your will. Father, in the midst of the chaos and lament of this season, in your mercy, help us not to domesticate the wildness of your Spirit, but to be immersed in your generous love, rebuilding lives, supporting communities and being good news in your world.*

**Amen.**

## Principles and Process

### Guiding Principles<sup>1</sup>

Our first priority in determining how to reopen our churches is the safety of all involved and, more particularly, ensuring that our actions limit to the degree possible the risk of spreading the virus. The CDC serves as [the authoritative source for guidance](#) in how best to meet that goal; all plans for reopening churches should comply with standards set by the CDC as well as those of the state and other regional or local governmental bodies.

In light of the CDC guidance, the diocese recommends parishes keep the following principles in mind:

- Anyone who is experiencing [COVID-19-like symptoms](#), regardless of his or her age, should not attend church at any time.
- In developing policies and procedures, parishes should assume that the novel coronavirus can remain active on surfaces for up to 72 hours.
- Safe practices require both distancing and masking until either the virus is eradicated or vaccines have been effectively deployed.
- Bear in mind that gloves do not prevent transmission of the virus. People need to avoid touching their eyes, nose and mouth regardless of whether they are wearing gloves.
- Pay special attention to the needs of the most vulnerable individuals—those over 60 and those with pre-existing health conditions.
- Because asymptomatic individuals can still infect those around them, proceed on the assumption that anyone could be a carrier of the virus.

As the Body of Christ, we understand that there are other factors that go well beyond these guidelines.

- We must strive for the inclusion of all in the life of the Church. This includes not only those whose health requires that they self-isolate but also those who opt to do so until either the virus is eradicated or vaccines have been effectively deployed. We should therefore consider continuing on-line or streaming worship, bringing the sacraments to those unable or unwilling to attend services physically, and providing a way for those without computers or smart phones to worship at home.
- Children hold a very special place in our congregations. We must therefore consider when to include children, as well as how to address the special issues that may arise with children when it comes to maintaining physical distance.

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<sup>1</sup> Source credit, with gratitude, to the Diocese of Pittsburgh.

- Our planning must honor our Episcopal traditions, including, if possible, the celebration of the Eucharist as a community, the role of the priest as celebrant of the liturgy, and the distribution of the sacrament to the people.
- Our Baptismal Covenant calls us to do more than simply worship together. Plans should therefore take into account the many other forms of ministry and mission that each parish pursues.

It is also important to recognize that there is much that we still do not know. The situation will remain fluid for some time and all planning should therefore take into account the possibility that future circumstances may require returning to a higher level of restriction. This document may also be revised to reflect new knowledge about the virus.

Respectfully,

### **The Covid-19 Pandemic Preparedness & Response Task Force**

The Rev. Mary Garner (Rector of St. Paul's Centreville & Task Force Co-Chair, Standing Committee)  
 Mr. John Dragone (Small Church Rep, Sr Warden of St. Clement's, Massey, Standing Committee)  
 The Rev. Mark Delcuze (Rector of Christ Church Kent Island, Liturgical Commission, Standing Committee)  
 The Honorable Judge David Mitchell (Task Force Chair, Diocesan Council)  
 The Rev. David Michaud (Task Force Secretary, Rector of St. Peter's Salisbury, Diocesan Council)  
 Dr. Lisa Webb (Vice-President Diocesan Council, Deacon Candidate, Diocesan Council)  
 The Rev. Dr. Bill Ortt (Rector of Christ Church, Easton, Large Church Representative)  
 The Rev. Dr. Frieda Malcolm (Retired Clergy Representative)  
 The Very Rev. Charles Osberger (Rector of Wye Parish, Dean, Middle Convocation)  
 The Very Rev. Michael Moyer (Rector of St. Paul's Berlin, Dean, Southern Convocation)  
 The Very Rev. Henry Sabetti (Rector of Shrewsbury Parish, Dean, Northern Convocation)  
 Dr. George Curlin (Holy Trinity Parish, Epidemiologist)  
 Dr. Thomas De Marco (Peninsula Regional Hospital)  
 The Rev. Canon Patrick Collins (Diocesan Staff, Canon to the Ordinary, Rector of All Faith Tunis Mills)  
 Mrs. Joanne Fisher (Diocesan Staff, Communications Officer)  
 Mr. Ernie Cornbrooks, Esq. (Diocesan Chancellor)  
 Ex-Officio: The Right Rev. Santosh Marray (Diocesan Bishop)

### **Primary Resources**

[The Book of Common Prayer](#)  
[CDC Interim Guidance for Communities of Faith](#)  
[State of Maryland Roadmap to Recovery](#)  
[Guidance Generated by Other Dioceses](#)

## **Covenant for Regathering** [Shared from the Diocese of Maryland]

In response to the current COVID-19 pandemic, I promise, with God's help and to the best of my ability, to abide by the guidelines of the Diocese of Easton for participation in the life of my congregation according to the regathering phase in which my congregation is authorized to carry out its mission and ministry.

In fulfillment of the Baptismal Covenant (BCPp. 304-305), I will strive to:

Love my neighbor as myself, I will...

- Wear a mask or scarf over my nose and mouth at all times in church buildings, except momentarily to receive the sacrament or lead worship through an assigned speaking part, and follow public health guidelines for hand sanitizing and disinfecting
- Only attend worship and receive communion if am non-symptomatic for the COVID-19 virus or any other transmittable disease that could compromise the health of another congregant
- Will abstain from attending if doing so would put me at greater risk due to my own health status

Respect the dignity of every human being, I will...

- Make no physical contact with people beyond the members of my own household
- Maintain a six foot or more distance from other members of the congregation
- Respect any requests for distance, masking, and cleaning, to ensure the safety and comfort level of others

Seek and serve Christ in all people...

- Trust and support the decisions of both my diocesan and congregational leaders
- Stay connected with others in my community by telephone, video chat, or mail

## **Checklist for Reopening**

Each congregation is asked to use [this checklist](#) as they enter into the process of reopening their buildings and returning to on-site ministry and worship. This checklist, upon approval by the Vestry, should be submitted to [bishop@dioceseofeaston.org](mailto:bishop@dioceseofeaston.org). The Bishop may consult with Task Force members as needed, ask for clarifications, or make suggestions. Upon approval by the Bishop, in consultation with the Chancellor, the congregation may proceed with opening in compliance with these guidelines.

We understand that local vestries and clergy know their parishes best. Parishes are urged to make full use of the talents, energy, and creativity of both the lay and the ordained members of their parish. If all involved remain open-minded and bear in mind our shared goal of reopening our churches in ways that are safe and true to our Baptismal promises, the result may be a new understanding of how to prosper the Kingdom of God in a world that may no longer be well served in the old familiar ways.

## Overarching Considerations

A workable plan will demonstrate that the parish has consistently kept in mind the following three considerations, which in turn dictate so many key details:

- **The critical importance of distancing:** the need to keep clergy, staff, congregants, family groups and visitors at least six feet apart at all times.
- **The critical importance of face masks:** the importance of having everyone in your building (except children under two, clergy when they are presiding or preaching and individuals with health conditions incompatible with wearing masks) wear a mask.
- **The special danger to vulnerable populations:** the importance of supporting the members of vulnerable populations (and the other members of their households) as they make the decision whether or not to shelter in place.<sup>2</sup>

## **Major Questions**

*The seven Major Questions that you should consider when completing your checklist are these:*

- How will you prepare your facility and your congregation for reopening?
- What alternatives will you provide for parishioners who cannot or choose not to attend in person?
- How will you keep your facilities clean and encourage appropriate hygiene practices?
- How will you manage the numbers in attendance so that physical distance can be maintained? And how will numbers affect your potential need to assist congregants in contact tracing?
- How will you assist congregants to maintain physical distancing and in other ways reduce the risk of spreading the virus?
- How will you communicate your policies to your parishioners and guests prior to and throughout the process of reopening?
- How will you apply your policies to parish activities other than public worship and to outside groups that use your building?

## Communications with the Congregation

Using this document as a reference, a letter from the parish office should be circulated to all congregants with clear expectations and to ensure that measures are being taken to protect worshippers.

- Include Social Distancing Policy for both outside (including parking lots) and inside the facility.

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<sup>2</sup> In some cases, clergy and lay leaders in the parish may themselves fall into this category, in which case it will be important to consider with care the implications for them of whatever policies are developed.

- Include the number of attendees permitted by social distancing and whether you will be using a reservation system or a first come, first served system.
- Include the examination questions that will be asked prior to entrance.
- Include a [Covenant for Regathering](#).

Encourage congregants to arrive earlier to accommodate new entrance procedures.

Prepare signs to post at the entrance to worship and around the campus that reinforce the main expectations in this document. [Link to CDC Posters for Print](#).

Reporting: A parishioner reporting a positive test of Covid-19 should be referred immediately to the health department. Clergy will be required to report this information to their local health department as well to ensure the safety of all.

## Prior to ReOpening:

All Prayer Books, Hymnals, any literature and books that can be handled by more than one person are to be removed from the pews and worship space.

Kneelers that cannot be disinfected after each service are to be removed from the worship space.

Ventilation system(s) in the worship space turned on (or windows opened) for air movement in space; fresh air circulating into space. Prior to initial reopening, the ventilation system should be turned on for at least two days to ensure that contaminants that may have accumulated from non-use will be removed from the system.

Water systems including sinks and toilets should also be run prior to their initial use to ensure that contaminants that may have accumulated from non-use will be removed from the system.

Areas in the building where people can congregate are to be restricted.

Bathrooms should only accommodate one person/family at a time.

To ensure entrance into the worship space is controlled, it is recommended that only one entrance be used. The entrance will need space where examination questions are asked and a log book is kept for people to register their attendance.

A method for recording facility use (**log book**) must be used to maintain a record of *all* persons



entering the facility, including clergy (this should be done prior to hand sanitizing station if a communal pen is being used). This log book will be used for contact tracing if needed - persons must record, at minimum, their phone number & county of residence (full home address is preferred). [Some good info on Log Books.](#) [Click here for a sample log book page for print.](#)

## **Prior to /Between Each Service:**

Worship space (and other areas intended for use) are cleaned and disinfected before and in between each service, following [CDC guidelines](#):

- Normal routine cleaning with soap and water on surfaces and objects
- Disinfection using [EPA-approved disinfectants](#) against COVID-19
- For their safety, those who are cleaning should wear masks and gloves for cleaning and disinfecting.
- Objects frequently touched require special attention for disinfection: doorknobs, light switches, handles, toilets, faucets and sinks.
- A log should be kept of who and when cleaning and disinfecting occurs.

Follow CDC guidelines for cleaning and disinfecting between each service. Please allow for at least a four hour gap between the use of each facility.

Entrances are stocked with hand sanitizer and hygiene wipes – recommend touchless dispensers. Hand sanitizer is placed within reach of the celebrant and ministers at the altar.

Trash is double-bagged and disposed of using gloves and masks.

Pews are marked as needed to maintain social distancing requirements (see *Social Distancing* section below).

### **Altar Guild Responsibilities**

- Altar Guilds must wear masks and practice social distancing during their work.
- Altar Guild ensures that all vessels are thoroughly washed. Dirty linens are not shaken. Linens are washed using the warmest appropriate water setting for the items and are allowed to dry completely. Transport linens in disposable bags where possible.
- During this time consider limiting members in the worship space and sacristy to those essential to complete tasks.
- Altar Guild members who work in the church must register their attendance in the log book and adhere to the health questions asked before entrance is granted.



## Admittance to The Worship Space:

**Parking Lots:** Please maintain six (6) feet distancing when arriving and departing the church property. Wear masks at all times.

**Nursery/Children:** No nursery services and/or Children's ministry should be provided at this time. Providing this service and ministry should be revisited when the state and local school boards present a plan to open schools

**Capacity:** The parish identifies its capacity for worship by measuring out the maximum number of people who can socially distance in the church. Generally speaking, expect normal seating capacity to be reduced to 15-25 percent capacity depending upon architectural layout. Calculate based on an average household unit of two being able to sit together with minimum of six feet to the next closest person.

### **Outdoor Services:**

- Churches should anticipate that parishioners may still enter the bathrooms and other accessible areas of the church. Cleaning and disinfecting policies should still be followed (as seen above).
- Please maintain six (6) feet distancing side to side and front to back while attending outside services
- All attendees must wear masks
- Family units that reside together may sit together.
- Please refer to the specific guidance offered for communion, ushers, offertory, and movement during the service
- Suggest bringing your own chair/blanket
- If chairs are provided, they must be cleaned and disinfected prior to and after use.

**Attendance Policy:** The Parish shall establish an attendance policy for allowing entrance into the church.

#### Option A: By Reservation

- The number of reservations cannot exceed the capacity as established above.
- Reservations should include at least a home address & primary phone (for contact tracing purposes). The list of those who made reservations is placed at the entrance and used as the attendance roster.

#### Option B: First come, first served

- Entrance is allowed to people up to the capacity as established above. The church entrance would then be closed to additional worshippers.
- All attendees, including children must register in the log book before they are allowed

entrance.

**Rules of Admittance:** The entrance of persons into the worship space is allowed if:

- The person is wearing a mask.
- The person registers their attendance in the log book.
- The person has signed the [Covenant](#) (believes themselves to be without infection) OR successfully answers the the four questions below<sup>3</sup>:
  1. Have you had ANY of the following symptoms of COVID-19 infection in the last seven (7) days:
    - Cough (either new, or different than your usual cough), shortness of breath, or difficulty breathing?
    - Fever (either subjective, or measured) or chills?
    - Sore throat?
    - Unusual muscle pain or unusual headache?
    - New loss of taste or smell?

*If YES, discontinue questions, deny access, and recommend that the individual contact their physician to discuss possible COVID-19 symptoms.*

2. Have you had a positive test for COVID-19 infection within the past ten (10) days?

*If YES, discontinue questions, deny access, and recommend that the individual self-quarantine as directed by their physician.*

3. Have you been within six (6) feet for longer than 15 minutes with someone who has suspected or confirmed COVID-19 infection.

*If YES, discontinue questions, deny access, and recommend that the individual self-quarantine as directed by their physician.*

4. Are you willing to wear a mask and abide by the social distancing and other safety requirements that are part of this worship service?

*If NO, deny access.*

**Check-In:** No one is to be admitted into the worship space until their attendance is recorded in the log book.

**Parishioners reluctant/refusing to follow protocols and rules:**

All Parishioners are to be educated in advance about what is to be expected for an in-person worship experience during time of the pandemic so they are well aware of what is required, e.g., mask wearing, screening at entrance, sitting socially distant, no physical contact in passing of the peace,

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<sup>3</sup> First three questions taken from State of Maryland Screening Questionnaire updated 5/18/20.

requirements for receiving Holy Communion, no coffee hour or socializing inappropriately. These rules are to be posted at the entrance as well so that there is no doubt about what the experience will be. Consider using [this Covenant](#).

Due to the nature of this pandemic, people not willing to abide by these guidelines may not attend in-person worship. Encourage these persons to join your digital offerings.

## During the Service

Seven (7)<sup>4</sup> feet distancing should be maintained at all times while wearing a face mask. Cloth masks are preferable. Remember: **No hugs. No kisses. No handshaking.**

Ushers are to wear masks and practice social distancing: no physical contact with others.

Ushers, especially in the beginning of restoring in-person worship, may need to direct people to their seats.

Central stations may be set up for receiving collections. Passing the plate or presentation of the collection plate to the celebrant is not permitted. Online giving is strongly encouraged.

Since prayer books and hymnals are removed, one of the following methods is suggested:

- For those churches with Wi-Fi: post worship bulletins in advance on a parish website and encourage parishioners to bring their own tablets and smart devices to access the bulletin electronically and use their devices to follow the service
- Display prayers and hymns on large screens in the church.
- Provide paper worship bulletins that are placed on a table for people to individually pick up and take home with them. Consider making worship bulletins available in advance on a parish website for at-home printing.

Number in altar party, which can include lay and ordained, should be appropriate to the space available.

Use of masks by Celebrant is necessary if distance is less than 30 feet for preaching and other responsibilities. Use of a microphone is encouraged.

No sharing of microphones. The clergy and lay people who are using microphones in the service have their own microphones, which are cleaned and disinfected after each service.

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<sup>4</sup> From Maryland Government's [Faith-Based-Recommendations](#)

Congregation may not move from their seats for the exchange of the peace. Handshaking and touching are not permitted except within family units.

Congregational singing or vocal solos are not allowed at this time. Churches are encouraged to consider a quiet reading of text of a hymn. No brass or woodwinds allowed at this time. Bell choirs are permitted provided that social distancing is maintained.

At outdoor services, vocal soloists and musicians playing instruments that rely on the breath are permitted only if a 30 foot distance is maintained.

At the conclusion of the service ushers should be strategically stationed at exits and in the worship space to encourage people to socially distance and to not congregate but leave the building directly.

No coffee hour or other such gatherings inside or outside the parish property.

- Recommend signage at exit to reinforce social distancing.
- Parking Lots; Please maintain six (6) feet distancing when arriving and departing the church property.

## Holy Communion

Presentation of the gifts is not permitted at this time. Bread and wine will be placed on credence table or altar table prior to the service.

For Holy Communion, ushers may be needed to direct people to the proper way to approach the altar and where to stand and how to get back to their seats.

Celebrant for Holy Communion will be masked during distribution. Gloves are not permitted. Celebrant will wash hands with soap and water for 20 seconds prior to the sursum corda and after the fraction. The bread and wine must be covered by a purificator. Communicants will not receive wine, only the host. Commercial wafers must be used.

The Coronavirus Guidance on Receiving Holy Communion reminds parishioners who are about to take Holy Communion to follow the instruction of the servers to form a line and wait for their turns to receive the Host. They must keep wearing facial masks, refrain from talking, and maintain a physical distance of six feet from one another when queuing. Hands should be sanitized using alcohol-based sanitizers before taking communion. When hands have been sanitized, they should not be used to touch the mask or any other surfaces.

Congregation will receive communion standing. Ushers will not manually assist any communicants. Those with mobility issues will receive communion in their seat.

When a parishioner reaches the head of the queue, they should follow the four steps below to receive the Host from the clergy:

1. Place one palm over the other and wait for the priest to put the Host on their palm; do not reach out to take the Host to avoid touching other surfaces by accident;
2. Once the Host is on their palm, the parishioner should use the other hand that has not touched the Host to remove the loop of the mask from one of the ears, without touching either side of the mask;
3. Consume the Host on the clean hand while the other hand is still holding the ear loop;
4. Put the removed loop back around one's ear and adjust the mask properly.

Children can take Holy Communion only when accompanied by a parent or a guardian. Parents or guardians should first sanitize their own and their children's hands. After receiving the Host, the child should consume the Host immediately. The adult must then sanitize their hands again before taking Holy Communion themselves.

After taking Holy Communion, parishioners should use alcohol-based sanitizers to sanitize their hands again as soon as possible. Parishioners should avoid touching their eyes, nose, mouth, or any other surfaces before they have sanitized their hands. Upon returning to their seats, they can keep a moment of silence for prayers and should still maintain physical distance with one another.

Encouraged to include a Prayer for Spiritual Communion.

## **Life Event Services**

Log book, social distancing and masks are to be used for all events and services.

All Federal, State and Diocesan guidelines shall be maintained and executed.

### **Home / Private Baptisms**

*Realizing the normal baptismal rite is included within a celebration of Holy Eucharist on Sundays, we also understand there may be pastoral reasons to officiate at a family (private) baptism during this*

time.

- All Federal, State and Diocesan guidelines shall be maintained and executed. The Clergy person in charge shall have responsibility to enact such guidelines and procedures as they pertain to worship and facility sanitizing, utilizing assistance of others as deemed necessary.
- Log book, social distancing and masks are to be used.

### **Funerals and Burials**

- All funeral, memorial services and burial services shall utilize the same precautions and procedures as directed by Federal, State and Diocesan guidelines for worship during the coronavirus pandemic time.
- The clergy person will need to monitor the particular phase of guidance from the state of Maryland and apply them in determining attendance at such events.
- The use of masks and social distancing shall apply. Facility sanitizing will also be in effect.
- Log book, social distancing and masks are to be used.
- Should the clergy person determine that postponing the service and/or the burial is in the best interest of overall safety, it will be his/her responsibility to communicate with the family and the funeral director.

### **Weddings**

- Services of Holy Matrimony shall be left to the discretion of the clergy person in charge utilizing all Federal, State and Diocesan guidelines, including proper social distancing, the use of masks and facility sanitization.
- Communication will be necessary with the engaged couple and depending upon mutual agreement, postponement may be necessary based upon the state's current phase of pandemic response.
- At present, no receptions shall be held involving food service<sup>5</sup> and without using social distancing and masks.

## **Pastoral / LEV Visits**

All in-person pastoral visits inclusive of hospitals, rehabilitation centers, nursing and assisted living facilities, hospice and restricted access health care operations must conform to those entities visitation policies and procedures. Our standard is to achieve and maintain a "highest level of care" for all concerned. All in-person counseling appointments, home communions and the in-person ministry of Lay Eucharistic Visitors shall be required to conform to all current CDC guidelines and the policies for sacramental ministry adopted by the Diocese of Easton.

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<sup>5</sup> Individually packaged/boxed food is permitted but should not be eaten on the premises.



Clergy should consider their personal and familial health needs and readiness to offer pastoral care in these settings.

Clergy should consider conducting pastoral visits in a virtual space. If in-hospital, in-home visits focused on in-person meetings with family members take place, clergy should consider the environment in which these visits occur. Proximity to persons, an acceptable understanding of risk and a commitment to maintaining the highest level of care in the offering of the church's ministry are deemed requisite.

Model procedures for in person visitations are provided in this document and should be consulted by referencing sections on Holy Communion, personal distancing and personal protective equipment (PPE).

Clergy are requested to inform, and if determined as necessary, provide for the training of lay ministry leaders in these model procedures.

In special circumstances anointing may be required at the comfort level of the clergy. Otherwise, physical contact is not permitted.

### **Lay Eucharistic Visitors**

LEVs should consider their personal and familial health and readiness to offer in-person sacramental ministry mindful of the "highest level of care" for all concerned.

All lay eucharistic visitors shall agree to exercise their ministry under the supervision of the clergy. In advance of all scheduled visits the clergy shall be informed and give permission.

All guidelines adopted by this Diocese for the administration of Holy Communion will govern the ministry of LEV. Model procedures for in person visitations are provided in this document and should be consulted by referencing sections on Holy Communion, personal distancing and personal protective equipment (PPE).

LEV's shall keep a record and report to the clergy all in-person visits including the location and names of persons present.

LEVs shall take only enough to serve the people in each household (everything you take in, you leave).

Physical contact with recipients is not permitted (hugs, handshakes, etc).

## Other Events & Facilities Use

Midweek entrance into the worship space itself should be restricted. Any person entering the space during this time may need to sanitize space after use. Register attendance and adhere to health questions before entering.

**Church Sponsored Groups:** Facility use shall be determined by the existing and future Federal, State and Diocesan guidelines pertaining to facility use allowable occupant size. At present that number is 10 or less people per gathering using social distancing and masks. All other existing guidelines in this document shall also apply including the use of a log book and cleaning / disinfecting protocols.

**Outside Groups:** Use of facilities by outside groups is not recommended at this time. Any outside group that you do allow to use your facility must adhere to all existing guidelines in this document and is required to sign a written agreement ([sample here](#)).

**Twelve Step Recovery Groups:** Because of the special nature of Twelve Step Recovery groups, facility use will be governed by the clergy person or lay person in charge of the congregation. All existing guidelines shall apply\* and should be mutually agreed upon by facility management and the Twelve Step Group. This includes facility sanitization, social distancing and masks and as directed by further facility use guidelines.

\* A separate sign in policy may be enacted per [written agreement](#) between the facility manager and the Twelve Step Group.

## Appendix

### **Additional Resources:**

- [Printable Posters](#)
- [Executive Orders from Gov. Hogan](#)
- [Diocese of Central PA Guidelines](#)
- [MD, VA & DC Guidelines: Turning Toward the Future with Caution & Hope](#)
- [Church Insurance Guidelines](#)
- [Church Pulse Podcast](#)
- <https://www.erinbromage.com/post/the-risks-know-them-avoid-them>
- [Dr. Fauci on Reopening Churches](#)



# Episcopal Diocese of Easton

Welcome All | Share Jesus' Love | Serve the World

## Covid-19 Readiness Checklist

REGATHERING ON CHURCH PROPERTY FOR WORSHIP AND OTHER PUBLIC USE

Name of church or institution:

Address:

Office phone number:

Name of applicant submitter:

Email contact:

Phone contact:

Desired date to regather for worship:

Desired date to regather for other public uses:

Maximum social distancing seating capacity of worship space(s):

Will you have the following ready by your requested regathering date?

- Pews (if applicable) clearly marked to designate allowed seating
- Social distancing capacity in all gathering spaces has been determined
- Ushers or greeters trained according to diocesan guidelines
- Team or staff trained to clean and disinfect according to diocesan guidelines
- Sufficient cleaning and disinfecting supplies available
- Signage at entrances, exits and access points (including handicap) clearly communicated
- Log book for all facilities use / attendance at entrance
- Congregation received communication for regathering, including Covenant for Regathering
- Communicated with all other public users/groups and provided copies of Covenant for Regathering for Outside Groups
- Online or telephonic worship available as option for those not attending services in person
- Offering plate available near entrance to worship space
- Paper bulletins (if used) and copies of Covenant for Regathering available on Sundays on table near entrance and available to outside groups that use the property
- Prayer books, hymnals, and other materials removed from worship space

- On-line giving available through website or social media
- Extra masks available
- Hand sanitizer available near all entrances
- Reviewed liability insurance coverage
- Food or beverages not available before or after worship or meetings
- Other user groups notified of Covenant for Regathering for Groups and diocesan guidelines

If no to any of the above, please explain circumstances (use additional pages if needed):

Our specific logistics for how to distribute communion:

Other logistical considerations may be attached.

We the undersigned declare the information on this application to be accurate to the best of our knowledge and we promise to maintain the standards outlined in the Diocese of Easton Covid-19 Response Guidelines to the best of our ability. Furthermore if we are unable to provide any safety measures as outlined above, then we will cease to provide access until the measures can be reinstated.

Minimum two signatures required:

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Clergy in charge (or warden in absence of clergy)

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Warden or officer of vestry

DIOCESAN STAFF USE ONLY:

Receipt date:

Reviewed and approved by:

Date:

Notes: