

As you know, we are currently in Phase I. It will be necessary for you to check with your regional bishop prior to proceeding to Phase II.

Phase II Office Guidelines

1. Be attentive and follow the gathering guidelines for your region.
2. Receive permission from the regional bishop to open the office.
3. Clergy and staff should either have a molecular test performed to see if they have the virus, or an antibody test to see if they had the virus and now have immunity.
4. People will be required to wear fabric nonmedical face masks while in the community to reduce their risk of asymptomatic spread.
5. Clean surfaces that are frequently touched- such as shared desks, countertops, kitchen areas, electronics, and doorknobs.
6. We advise that vulnerable populations of individuals “older than age 60 and those with compromised immune systems or compromised lung and heart function should continue to engage in physical distancing, including “stay at home – work safe” protocols.
7. Create an emergency plan for possible outbreak. You will need to close if someone contracts COVID-19. And participants with proximity to the individual who is sick will have to be quarantined. Surfaces will have to be cleaned by an outside contractor.

Phase II Worship Guidelines at Church

All offices and church gatherings or service work reopened during this time will have to follow these measures:

1. Be attentive and follow the gathering guidelines for your region.
2. Receive permission from the regional bishop.
3. Encourage staff or community members to [protect their personal health](#).
4. Post the signs and [symptoms of COVID-19](#): fever, cough, shortness of breath.
5. Clergy and church employees will be tested for COVID-19, with negative results, if such testing is required by local civic leaders.
6. People will be required to wear fabric nonmedical face masks while in the community to reduce their risk of asymptomatic spread.
7. Clean surfaces that are frequently touched- such as shared desks, countertops, kitchen areas, electronics, and doorknobs.
8. Limit events and meetings that require close contact. In worship this means:
 - A. No sharing of the common cup. The celebrant may drink only. No intinction.
 - B. No physical touch during the passing of the Peace.
9. Stay up to date on developments in your community.
10. Create an emergency plan for possible outbreak. You will need to close if someone contracts COVID-19. And, participants with proximity to the individual who is sick will have to be quarantined. Surfaces will have to be cleaned by an outside contractor.
11. Assess which community members are at higher risk and plan accordingly.ⁱ

12. We would advise that vulnerable populations of individuals “older than age 60 and those with compromised immune systems or compromised lung and heart function, should continue to engage in physical distancing as much as possible until a vaccine is available, an effective treatment is available, or there is no longer community transmission.”ⁱⁱ
13. Ask those who are sick to stay home and seek testing for COVID-19. Testing should become more widespread and routine. We will want to pray for them and follow up ensuring safe distancing and 14-day protocols prior to reentering offices and gatherings.ⁱⁱⁱ

Each congregation will need to receive permission from the regional bishop to reopen the office and to regather for bible study or worship. Permission during phase III will also need to be sought to restart service ministries.

Phase II Home Worship Guidelines

1. Be attentive and follow the gathering guidelines for your region.
2. Receive permission from the regional bishop.
3. Have a plan if guidelines allow 10, 50, or 100 to gather. How big is the program?
4. Encourage staff and participants to [protect their personal health](#).
5. Clergy and church employees must be tested for COVID-19, with negative results, if such testing is required by local civic leaders.
6. People will be required to wear fabric nonmedical face masks while in the community to reduce their risk of asymptomatic spread.
7. Clean surfaces that are frequently touched- such as shared desks, countertops, kitchen areas, electronics, and doorknobs.
8. Limit events and meetings that require close contact. This is problematic for home worship and must be considered.
9. Stay up to date on developments in your community.
10. Create an emergency plan for possible outbreak. You will need to close if someone contracts COVID-19. And, participants with proximity to the individual who is sick will have to be quarantined. Surfaces will have to be cleaned by outside contractor.
11. Assess which community members are at higher risk and plan accordingly.^{iv}
12. We do not recommend home worship gatherings for vulnerable populations. We would advise that vulnerable populations of individuals “older than age 60 and those with compromised immune systems or compromised lung and heart function, should continue to engage in physical distancing as much as possible until a vaccine is available, an effective treatment is available, or there is no longer community transmission.”^v
13. Ask those who are sick to stay home and seek testing for COVID-19.^{vi}
14. If at any time a member of the worshiping group falls ill, then the whole group will need to quarantine for 14 days.

Phase II Youth and Summer Program Guidelines

We recognize that summer is a time for youth programs of various types. These guidelines are presented to help the rector, vestry, and staff make the safest decisions for summer ministries.

1. Be attentive and follow the gathering guidelines for your region.
2. Receive permission from the regional bishop.
3. Have a plan if guidelines allow 10, 50, or 100 to gather. How big is the program?
4. Encourage staff and participants to [protect their personal health](#).
5. Clergy and church employees must be tested for COVID-19, with negative results, if such testing is required by local civic leaders.
6. People will be required to wear fabric nonmedical face masks while in the community to reduce their risk of asymptomatic spread.
7. Clean surfaces that are frequently touched- such as shared desks, countertops, kitchen areas, electronics, and doorknobs.
8. Limit events and meetings that require close contact.
9. Stay up to date on developments in your community.
10. Create an emergency plan for possible outbreak. You will need to close if someone contracts COVID-19. And participants with proximity to the individual who is sick will have to be quarantined. Surfaces will have to be cleaned by outside contractor.
11. Assess which community members are at higher risk and plan accordingly.^{vii}
12. We would advise that vulnerable populations of individuals “older than age 60 and those with compromised immune systems or compromised lung and heart function should continue to engage in physical distancing as much as possible until a vaccine is available, an effective treatment is available, or there is no longer community transmission.”^{viii}
13. Ask those who are sick to stay home and seek testing for COVID-19.^{ix}
14. If the program is to perform service, then please follow the service guidelines.

Phase I and II Service Guidelines

Outreach and service during this time come with risk. With community spread of the coronavirus, those who interact with others raise the risk of infection for themselves, members of their households, and those with whom they interact. The greater the number of contacts outside the household, the higher the risk potential, whether the number is in one event, or the collective number over time.

Principles to Guide Congregations wanting to serve during Stay at Home/Shelter in Place

Follow all local guidelines

Group size, social distancing, sanitation protocol, use of masks and Personal Protective Equipment, and Essential Services requirements should all be followed at a minimum.

Invest in the needs of the vulnerable, rather than in the felt needs of the Church

As is always true, congregations should listen to the needs of their community, not just decide in a vacuum what is helpful. Churches should take their lead from disaster coordination groups in their local communities, or from agencies like the United Way, the local food bank, or the local government and work on the highest needs in ways that enhance, rather than diminish, community health. For most members of our churches, that means that they should stay at home and not venture out to do good.

Understand that limiting the number of people engaging in higher risk behavior (like leaving home to volunteer) serves to protect our health care professionals and vulnerable populations.

Service events or gatherings created by churches to meet their members' desire to volunteer are not advised at this time.

As the stay at home orders are lifted or testing becomes more widespread, additional avenues to serve will develop.

Critical Needs Need Funds

We have worked for years to turn churches from giving money to engaging in action. For many of the most pressing needs and for many congregations, the best way to help right now is to collect and donate funds to agencies equipped to meet critical needs with the lowest risk to the greater community.

Who should be encouraged to serve?

Outside the home:

Only individuals who do not fall into categories with elevated risk of severe infections and who also do not live with anyone who fall into categories with elevated risk. Adult household members should be consulted to share in decisions about the types of interactions and risks to which other household members may expose themselves. Children and teens have a difficult time with the protocols for social distancing and should therefore be considered at high risk of becoming infected and infecting others. Service projects that bring children out of their households into community with others should, therefore, be considered high risk.

What are the most pressing needs in the community?

Mental and emotional distress from social isolation, food access, blood supply, and the need for personal protective equipment are all confronting our communities at this time. In addition, financial needs to cover rent, utilities, food, other household and personal care products, and medications are elevated. Also, helping the recently unemployed navigate through the unemployment process.

How are these needs being addressed?

To get information about services, call 211 and ask about the service you need or want to fulfill. Partner with those who are or have developed safe processes to meet needs.

Food Access:

In most communities and cities, some existing organizations are coordinating responses. Large food pantries, for instance, working with the local food banks, have developed protocol to provide food while reducing risk of virus spread. This involves extensive sanitation procedures and the use of PPEs to protect staff and volunteers from each other and from the public they serve. Some of them need adult volunteers to assist with:

- Bringing empty boxes for packing groceries
- Packing boxes or bags for pick-up and delivery
- Placing boxes in cars and/or for pick up by walk-up clients
- Driving boxes for delivery, especially to older and/or disabled adults
- Cleaning

Aside from volunteering, food banks need critical financial donations to pay staff and purchase food.

Public schools or community centers in many communities are also providing meals for children and youth.

Food access and delivery for homeless populations

In some communities, organizations are preparing meals to deliver or distribute to homeless populations. Both the preparation and distribution of the food should be done through official channels, in which the safety protocols and the coverage of the needs are being assessed.

Blood and Platelet Supply:

Blood banks are holding blood drives in mobile units and in some facilities. Generally, staff-run, blood drives are in need of healthy adults to donate blood and platelets. All staffing or donating blood should be using masks and other protective gear and maintaining social distancing whenever possible. All blood drives should be appointment only, reducing waiting and interaction times.

Social Isolation and Mental Health:

Anxiety and loneliness and feelings of being overwhelmed increase during crises. With requirements to stay at home or socially distance, the frequency and risk from this reality multiply. These needs provide the greatest opportunity for local churches. By investing efforts in coordination, coaching, and curiosity, local churches can support their members, their members' friends, parents of children who attend the congregation's school or daycare, and community servants and partners. Here are a few ways to help:

- Calls and emails and texts are all entirely sanitary and free and are encouraged.
- Calls can be made by families with children to sing Happy Birthday to other members of the congregation, for instance.
- Find and publicize local county and state mental health resources and phone numbers.
- For members who are not comfortable with video technology, read one of the daily offices with them over the phone.
- Homework and homeschooling help
- Virtual board game parties or other distractions to give parents space

Some best practices we follow

Practice accountability when spending church funds. Keep a log. Keep receipts. Find someone who likes to keep track of the details and use a tracking system.

Practice volunteer etiquette. Respect the dignity of every human being. (Ex: Ask before taking a photo of a beneficiary. Consider taking photos that do not reveal the faces of those being served.)

When making check-in phone calls, take care not to overpromise. Prepare callers. The person describing their own needs may expect that something will come of the inquiry. Be clear about the objective of the phone call/inquiry with your callers. Consider scripts as a framework.

ⁱ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “Schools, Workplaces & Community Locations,” March 21, 2020, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/index.html>.

ⁱⁱ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “People Who Are at Higher Risk for Severe Illness,” March 26, 2020, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-at-higher-risk.html>.

ⁱⁱⁱ Gottlieb, Roadmap.

^{iv} Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “Schools, Workplaces & Community Locations,” March 21, 2020, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/index.html>.

^v Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “People Who Are at Higher Risk for Severe Illness,” March 26, 2020, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-at-higher-risk.html>.

^{vi} Gottlieb, Roadmap.

^{vii} Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “Schools, Workplaces & Community Locations,” March 21, 2020, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/index.html>.

^{viii} Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “People Who Are at Higher Risk for Severe Illness,” March 26, 2020, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-at-higher-risk.html>.

^{ix} Gottlieb, Roadmap.