

Guidance to Clergy and Lay Pastoral Leaders regarding Covid-19 Risk During Reentry Period

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After these many weeks of stay-at-home orders, we are now beginning to resume in-person ministry under the guidelines set by the Diocese. Clergy and lay ministers are over sixty or who have additional risk factors may feel internal or external pressures to resume in-person worship leadership and pastoral care, influencing them to disregard dangers of infection. All Clergy and lay ministers, whether or not they face increased risk to Covid-19, may be tempted to put themselves in harm's way out of a sense of compassion and pastoral obligation. Remember that we value you and your ministry and want you to remain healthy. We do not want you to take unnecessary risks. Please follow the guidelines below.

Considerations when allowed to be present with those infected, or those hospitalized in places in which the virus is known to be present.

- Clergy and lay ministers at high risk by age or other factor should refrain from entering institutions where the virus is known to be or likely to be present.
- Other clergy and lay ministers should not visit those known to be infected in person unless they have tested positive for antibodies which have been proven to indicate immunity; *and*
 - Treatments for the virus have been discovered and are available; *or*
 - A vaccination is available, and they have been vaccinated.
- When visiting those hospitalized or confined in places in which the virus is known to be present, clergy and lay ministers who are in not in high-risk categories should
 - Use all available and recommended personal protective equipment, particularly masks, even if they believe they have immunity,
 - Keep visits brief, and
 - Follow all CDC guidelines for sanitation, social distancing, etc. in place at the time of the visit.

Considerations for resuming in-person worship and other ministry for Clergy and Lay Pastoral Leaders.

- Care for yourself and the others with whom you live by:
 - Following the CDC guidelines that apply to your personal situation,
 - Consult with the other adults in your household about the risks your re-engagement might bring to them, and
 - Talk to your regional bishop about ways to care for yourself while providing for the worship and care of the congregation.