The Episcopal Diocese of Central Florida
GENERAL COVID GUIDELINES/MODIFICATIONS
(Effective 3/1/21)

• If someone is not feeling well, or if they believe they may have been exposed to someone who is not feeling well, please encourage people to stay home, self-quarantine and restrict their access to others.

• Please get vaccinated for the COVID-19 Virus and encourage others to be vaccinated. Let them know that you have begun the process!

• Consider having computer savvy volunteers assist seniors and others to help them make their online vaccine appointments.

• While on church property, all persons over 16 years of age must be masked anytime while indoors.

• 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.

• Even if people have had the Covid-19 vaccine they must still wear a mask (see inset box above).

• Social distancing of non-family groups shall remain at 6’.

• Occupancy may increase up to 50% of fire code building/room capacity as long as 6’ social distancing is still maintained/observed.

• Sunday school and youth groups may begin meeting. Please encourage outdoor settings whenever possible.

• 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 must self-quarantine until four days after exposure. After four days you should have a COVID-19 test. Please remain in self-

CDC guidelines 1/12/2021
“It may seem counterintuitive, but health officials say that even after you get vaccinated against COVID-19, you still need to practice the usual pandemic precautions, at least for a while. That means steering clear of crowds, continuing to wear a good mask in public, maintaining 6 feet or more of distance from people outside your household and frequently washing your hands.”
quarantine until your results reveal that you are negative. Whether you have symptoms or not, if you test positive, you must remain in quarantine until you have a negative COVID-19 test result.

- If someone who attended a worship service in the church tests positive, all persons present at the services conducted since that service should be contacted to let them know that on _______ date there was a person present who tested positive. Recommend that they receive a COVID-19 test. Do not reveal the identity of the person who tested positive or what section they were seated in during the service. The church should be thoroughly cleaned and unused for 10 days following the exposure. If there is an alternative space (parish hall, outdoor garden, drive-through, etc.) that can be used for the worship service that was not visited by the COVID-19 positive person on that day, or since that day, that is also a viable alternative for in-person worship.

- 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, 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.

- Summer planning is underway at Camp Wingmann and in several of our congregations. The plan is to permit summer programs to operate, many with reduced staff and youth. Adult workers and staff will need to be masked while indoors. Use of masks by children and youth will be determined by their parent(s)/guardian(s). Since no one knows what will evolve in the coming months, these guidelines may be changed for summer camps/programs. We recommend following the COVID-19 guidelines generated by the Episcopal Camp and Conference Center organization:

- LEV, LEM or private communions delivered by lay persons are now permitted.
- Clergy may resume normal visitations for pastoral care and for pastoral needs.
- Small receptions (under 30 persons) are permitted for weddings and funerals. COVID-19 guidelines for congregational use and modified food service guidelines (above) apply.

**LITURGICAL:**

- Clergy must continue to wear a mask when celebrating the Eucharist from the Sursum Corda through the ablutions.
- If when preaching/reading at the lectern/pulpit there are no persons within 12’ of the preacher/reader, the speaker may remove their mask while at the pulpit/lectern.
- The chalice is not to be offered to any members of the congregation *in any form*. Only the celebrant may drink/intinct from the chalice.
- Intinction is not permitted except by the celebrant at the end of communion.
- There is to be no foot-washing on Maundy Thursday or at any time during Lent.
If you are having Stations of the Cross, have the clergy and one or two persons at each station. Ask the rest of the congregation to remain seated (i.e. do not process from station to station).

- Palm crosses may be made and distributed. They should be placed in individual baggies or zip lock bags and distributed.
- Small tongs/forceps may be used by the celebrant in place of, or in addition to, disposable gloves for the distribution of communion.
- The celebrant should receive communion LAST, immediately before the ablutions. When the celebrant receives communion first, you are placing your gloved hand near your mouth and adjusting your mask with your gloved hand, increasing the possibility of contamination. The rubrics in the BCP intend that the clergy receive first, but Bishop Brewer has accepted this modification and suggests that the clergy receive communion at the end of the distribution.

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 guidelines represent the minimum standards for our response to safeguarding against 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 at 321-525-2366, or email him at sholcombe@cfdiocese.org.

Please note, many edits from the January 2021 COVID guidelines have been made. Only the following guidelines from January 2021 are still in effect:

- The church must have available 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 tracking 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,

- Maintain 6’ social distancing.
- 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.
- No 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 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 four 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.
- 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!
- 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.