



Gulf Atlantic Diocese

of the Anglican Church in North America

Summary of COVID-19 Guidelines

Updated 4/23/2021

3 Phases to Re-Open based on levels of local community risk:

1. **High risk:** Retain social distancing at 6 feet. All people still masked. [For 11+ new daily cases/100,000 people in the county or city. See [CovidActNow.org](https://www.covidactnow.org)]
2. **Medium risk:** Offer two zones if possible (or two worship services): An open zone (not socially distanced, masks optional) and a safe zone (socially distanced by households and masks). Parishioners assume some risk by making choice. [For 1-10/100,000 daily cases]
3. **Low risk:** End mask and distance protocols, with each person assuming personal risk. People with health concerns are welcome to wear masks or stay online. Parishioners assume risk by making choice. This phase may not be implemented until Pentecost (May 23) at the earliest. [below 1/100,000 cases]

Congregations may certainly move slower than these guidelines permit, but not faster.

Guidelines:

- You may use local or state government data instead of CovidActNow.org.
- Please give your congregations at least 2 weeks' notice for any change in plans.
- Continue streaming worship services (or having recorded services) online for those not ready to come due to health concerns. This online ministry may also help to attract new members.
- Moving to any stage should be dependent on local daily case rates continuing downward (or being below a 1% infection rate).
- Small groups of 15 or fewer adults who are fully vaccinated or who have Covid antigens may begin to meet anytime without masks or social distancing.
- Follow CDC [guidelines](#) for childcare, continue cleaning protocols and provide sanitizer.
- Use of intinction of wafers by the one distributing (who shall remain masked) or of wafers with drops of wine (or of similarly safe means) shall continue until the diocese as a whole attains a low community risk level. This is as much for pastoral as for medical reasons.
- All organizations using your facilities should utilize this plan.
- Train your team on these guidelines and have a plan in case someone gets sick.

Considerations for making decisions to be asked before each change (Rector and Vestry should agree):

- Are we following local mask mandates or other similar public restrictions? (The bishop requires that if there are such mandates they will be followed, as long as public worship itself is not prohibited.)
- What is the risk level in our local community? Is it decreasing or increasing? [CovidActNow.org](https://www.covidactnow.org/) provides a good simple barometer. Local health department websites also give information. If it is increasing, congregations must wait to make any change until it begins to decline. Note: The daily case rate is generally calculated differently for smaller communities.
- Do we have a way to alert the congregation if someone is found to be infected while maintaining privacy?
- Would we do better to worship outdoors which radically mitigates risk?

By all means, please be in touch with the bishop's office if you have any questions or concerns or requests for exceptions. In general, a request for an exception which is based on the level of congregational vaccination must include the results of an anonymous poll of those attending. (Any congregation with a low vaccination rate cannot be a safe environment unless the general community risk is also low.)