

LIGHT SHINES IN THE DARKNESS

A PASTORAL CARE
TOOL KIT FOR
ACCOMPANYING
PARISHIONERS



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Light Shines in the Darkness

A Pastoral Care Tool Kit for Accompanying Parishioners



November 5, 2020

Dear Parish Leaders,

As you know, the Bishops of the Province of Indianapolis recently extended until further notice the dispensation from the obligation of the faithful to attend Sunday Mass. At the same time, I continue to envision a four-fold effort to engage Catholics who may be ready to return to Mass at Christmas.

- Between now and Thanksgiving: A time to **Reconnect**
- From the 1st Sunday of Advent until Christmas: A time to **Return**
- Christmas: A time to **Renew**
- Post-Christmas: A time to **Recommit**

To assist you in this effort, I established a task force to create a tool kit of resources that priests and parish leaders can employ to welcome the faithful to Sunday worship. The members of this task force include Fr. Kevin Huber, Deacon Daniel Lowery, Deacon Robert Marben, Michael Wick, Victoria Hathaway, Sean Martin, and Vanessa Negrete. I am thankful to them for their time and creativity.

As we anticipate the Advent Season and the celebration of Christmas, “Light Shining in the Darkness” emerges as a powerful theme that animates our efforts to reconnect, return, renew, and recommit with the members of your parish(es). Hopefully, these resources will encourage innovative and creative conversations between you and your parish leaders, empowering you to create an environment where the faithful can experience safety, hope, peace, and meaning as they face many challenges in this season of Covid-19.





Included in this tool kit you will find resources that include:

- A checklist for creating safe and sanitary environments
- Suggestions for hospitality and welcome
- A plan for reaching out to members of your community
- Strategies for connecting with large groups
- Script suggestions for calling members
- A prayer calendar for use during the Season of Advent

While Covid-19 has created significant strategic challenges for all of us, we have an opportunity not only to survive, but to thrive. Thoughtful and effective responses today will lay foundations for the future. I strongly encourage you to seize this moment of evangelization and discipleship.

If you have questions, suggestions or concerns, please contact the members of the task force at the Pastoral Center. In the meantime, be sure of our prayers for you and your faith communities, asking God's protection and inspiration.

Jesus, I trust in you.

Our Lady of Lourdes, pray for us.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Robert J. McClory
Bishop of Gary

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Letter to the Faithful on the Extension of the Dispensation from the Obligation to Attend Sunday Mass and Holy Days of Obligation



October 22, 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The Diocese of Gary, along with the other four dioceses in the State of Indiana, is extending the dispensation from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass and Holy Days of Obligation until further notice. This is due to the increase of Covid-19 cases in our state. The Indiana bishops will continue to monitor the situation to determine when it might be advisable to modify or lift the dispensation.

I'm grateful that all of our parishes are open for public worship and committed to keeping our churches safe for gathering. Over the last six months, our parishes have followed safety protocols recommended by public health officials and designed for the public celebration of Mass, including face coverings, social distancing, and enhanced sanitizing. I commend our pastors, pastoral staff and volunteers who have gone to great lengths to assure the safety of the faithful as they worship in our churches.

If you have not returned to Mass recently, I encourage you to contact your local parish to ask questions and learn how well the various safety protocols have been working over these last six months.

The Sunday celebration of the Mass is at the core of our expression of faith. Attending Mass in person is where we receive Jesus in the Holy Eucharist. Being dispensed from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass does not mean people should stay away from church or fail to keep holy the Lord's Day. If you are healthy, not in a risk category, and not caring for a person in a risk category, then the normal practice of attending Mass should continue.

In the climate of the pandemic, each person must prayerfully consider his or her individual situation. The continued dispensation is a helpful measure since a number of the faithful may still find it difficult to fulfill the obligation during this time. Those who are not able to attend in person should consider how they will honor the Lord's Day. It is the Catholic tradition that Sunday is also kept holy by refraining from work, increasing our love of the Lord and extending charity to others through prayer and service.



If you are not able to attend Sunday Mass in person, I hope you will join your parish community spiritually. Most parishes offer livestream coverage of Sunday Mass (for a listing: www.dcgary.org). Please be assured that your pastor and parish community, along with myself and all of the faithful gathered in public worship throughout Northwest Indiana, are holding you in prayer.

There is no limit on the love of Jesus and the power of the Eucharist. “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.” (Heb 13:11)

Thank you for keeping me in your prayers and know of my love and prayers for you. If I can pray for you specifically, please share your request through the diocesan website (www.dcgary.org) or by email pray@dcgary.org.

Jesus, I trust in you...

Our Lady of Lourdes, pray for us.

Your Servant,
The Most Reverend Robert J. McClory
Bishop of Gary

Reconnecting with Parishioners

Liturgical Reminder



As you begin to prepare and plan for Advent and Christmas, parish leaders should review state and local health guidelines for liturgical and non-liturgical events and make plans accordingly.

When holding events, keep in mind that all events should be:

- **Safe**
- **Sanitized**
- **Socially Distanced**

Check with the most up-to-date liturgical guidelines at <http://bit.ly/DGguidelines>.

Reconnecting with Parishioners

Checklists for Non-Liturgical Gatherings



The following checklists were created to help parishes think through their planning process for liturgical and non-liturgical gatherings, especially as we approach Advent and Christmas. These are for parish use. These checklists are intended to be a resource and do not need to be submitted or turned in.





“Light Shines in the Darkness...” (John 1:5)

Checklist for the Gradual Resumption of “Normal Operations” in Parishes as We Approach the Seasons of Advent and Christmas

The following checklist is designed to help pastors and those who work with them prepare for resuming something approximating “normal operations” as we approach the Seasons of Advent and Christmas during this time of pandemic. It can be used in conjunction with the *Checklist for Non-liturgical Gatherings and Events*, which was published by the Diocese of Gary in July 2020.

These criteria detailed below are not intended as hard and fast requirements. They are worded in a general way because our parishes are so different and because so many different kinds of liturgical and non-liturgical ministries are hosted in our parishes. In applying these criteria, it is important to adhere to guidelines established by the Centers for Disease Control and the State of Indiana in its *Back on Track Plan*.

The Sacraments				
1. Have the liturgical guidelines developed by the Liturgy Office been fully implemented?	Yes	No	N/A	Comment:
2. Will the Mass schedule now in place meet the level of demand anticipated for the Advent Season and beyond?	Yes	No	N/A	Comment:
3. If not, have changes needed to meet the anticipated level of demand been developed?	Yes	No	N/A	Comment:
4. Is a reservation process or some other comparable protocol in place to ensure the maximum use of the worship space for the Sunday liturgy?	Yes	No	N/A	Comment:
5. Are the times now scheduled for the Sacrament of Reconciliation sufficient to meet the anticipated level of demand for the Advent Season and beyond?	Yes	No	N/A	Comment:
6. If not, have changes needed to meet the anticipated level of demand been developed?	Yes	No	N/A	Comment:
7. Is easy and timely access provided to parishioners and to others who request the Anointing of the Sick?	Yes	No	N/A	Comment:
8. Is the scheduling of the other Sacraments now in place sufficient to meet the anticipated level of demand?	Yes	No	N/A	Comment:
9. If not, have changes needed to meet the anticipated level of demand for these other Sacraments been developed?	Yes	No	N/A	Comment:
10. Have sanitation instructions pertaining to all liturgies been shared via a written instruction or video with all those who are responsible for this essential service?	Yes	No	N/A	Comment:
Liturgical Ministries (e.g., lectors, EMHC's, music ministry, servers, hospitality, art and environment, etc.)				
1. Has a timetable been developed for the return of some or all liturgical ministers to active service as soon as possible given the current circumstances?	Yes	No	N/A	Comment:
2. Will re-training or formation be required before some or all liturgical ministers can return to active service?	Yes	No	N/A	Comment:
3. Will any space re-configurations or other physical changes in the worship space be needed before liturgical ministers can return to active ministry?	Yes	No	N/A	Comment:
4. Are appropriate safe distancing, masking requirements, health self-screening, and sanitizing protocols pertaining to all liturgical ministries now in place?	Yes	No	N/A	Comment:
5. Has provision been made for the regular and safe distribution of the Eucharist in visits to those who are homebound?	Yes	No	N/A	Comment:
6. Are parishioners returning to the Sunday liturgy always welcomed warmly as they enter the worship space?	Yes	No	N/A	Comment:

7. Are weekly envelopes and other financial contributions to the parish collected in a safe and secure manner?	Yes	No	N/A	Comment:
Non-liturgical Ministries (e.g., RCIA, food pantries, faith formation, adult formation, prayer groups, etc.)				
1. Is the current status (e.g., active, at-risk, postponed or deferred, etc.) of all key non-liturgical ministries well understood?	Yes	No	N/A	Comment:
2. Has a timetable been developed for the restoration of all key non-liturgical ministries to active status as soon as possible under the current circumstances?	Yes	No	N/A	Comment:
3. If the current circumstances do not permit the in-person resumption of a key non-liturgical ministry, is a virtual option feasible?	Yes	No	N/A	Comment:
4. Is re-training or formation required before some or all who serve in key non-liturgical ministries can return to active service?	Yes	No	N/A	Comment:
5. Will any space re-configurations or other physical changes in the parish's meeting spaces be needed before a key non-liturgical ministries can be restored to active ministry?	Yes	No	N/A	Comment:
6. Have appropriate safe distancing, masking requirements, health self-screening, and sanitizing protocols been developed for all key non-liturgical ministries?	Yes	No	N/A	Comment:
7. Can virtual technology or other means be employed to enable those who are in vulnerable populations to participate remotely in the parish's key non-liturgical ministries?	Yes	No	N/A	Comment:
The Unique Needs of Particular Populations				
1. Has the parish formally assessed who has returned to the parish's Sunday liturgies and who has not?	Yes	No	N/A	Comment:
2. Has an active outreach protocol been developed and implemented for maintaining personal contact with parishioners during this time of pandemic?	Yes	No	N/A	Comment:
3. Does the parish know if the particular needs of its more senior parishioners are now being met?	Yes	No	N/A	Comment:
4. Does the parish know if the particular needs of its young adults are now being met?	Yes	No	N/A	Comment:
5. Has the parish explored ways for young adults to be engaged in active ministry during this time of pandemic?	Yes	No	N/A	Comment:
6. Does the parish know if the needs of its middle schoolers and high schoolers are now being met?	Yes	No	N/A	Comment:
7. Does the parish know if the needs of its other-abled parishioners are now being met?	Yes	No	N/A	Comment:
8. Does the parish know if the particular needs of its parishioners who primarily speak Spanish are being met?	Yes	No	N/A	Comment:
Communications				
1. Is the information provided on the parish's website complete and accurate?	Yes	No	N/A	Comment:
2. Is the information provided on the parish's answering machine complete and accurate?	Yes	No	N/A	Comment:
3. Are responses to parishioners' inquiries consistently answered on a timely basis?	Yes	No	N/A	Comment:
4. Is a plan in place to communicate the Diocese's instruction pertaining to dispensations from the obligation to attend Mass on Sunday to all parishioners?	Yes	No	N/A	Comment:

Completed by: _____

Date: _____

Checklist for Non-liturgical Gatherings and Events -- November 20, 2020

The following criteria should be considered in deciding whether or not to move forward with any non-liturgical gatherings or events through the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic. These criteria are not intended as hard and fast requirements. Instead, they are provided to assist parishes in thinking through the many considerations that could come into play in this regard. These criteria are worded in a general way because so many different kinds of gatherings and events take place in our parishes.

In applying these criteria, it is important to adhere to guidelines established by the State of Indiana and the Centers for Disease Control. Guidelines documented in the State of Indiana's five-stage *Back on Track Plan* are detailed in the attachment to this document. Although the state's plan provides detailed guidance pertaining to liturgical gatherings, nothing specific is shared in the case of non-liturgical gatherings of various kinds. Nevertheless, some "best practices" in this regard can be extrapolated from the state's general and workplace guidelines. Please note that "social distancing" is required at every stage of the State of Indiana's *Back on Track Plan*. Note, too, that requiring individuals to wear face coverings is "optional" for organizations at stage 4 and stage 5 of the state's plan. Although optional, the wearing of face coverings remains a "best practice" even at stage 5.

Gathering or Event: _____ Anticipated Date: _____
 Sponsoring Entity: _____ Key Contact: _____
 Telephone No.: _____ Email: _____

Mission-orientation				
1. Is the gathering or event central to the mission of the Church, the diocese, or the parish?	Yes	No	N/A	Comment:
2. If so, can the gathering or event be re-scheduled to a later time without impeding the pursuit of the relevant mission?	Yes	No	N/A	Comment:
3. If the gathering or event is central to the mission of the Church, the diocese, or the parish, can it be conducted effectively in a virtual fashion?	Yes	No	N/A	Comment:
4. Is it appropriate in this instance to schedule multiple gatherings or events in order to ensure that social distancing can be maintained?	Yes	No	N/A	Comment:
5. If the gathering or event cannot be conducted safely, is there another way to meet the needs of those involved or those who are served?	Yes	No	N/A	Comment:
Approvals and Enforcement				
1. If the parish has guidelines in this regard beyond those provided by the state, have they been clearly communicated to those responsible for this gathering or event?	Yes	No	N/A	Comment:
2. Have all relevant stakeholders (e.g., housekeeping, the individual responsible for the parish's calendar, etc.) been apprised of this gathering or event?	Yes	No	N/A	Comment:
3. Has primary responsibility for ensuring the strict enforcement of requirements pertaining to this gathering or event been assigned?	Yes	No	N/A	Comment:
Participation				
1. Has a limit in keeping with current state, local, and parish guidelines been established for the number of individuals who will be allowed to participate in the gathering or event?	Yes	No	N/A	Comment:
2. Will an invitation or reservation system be used to ensure that the maximum number of participants present is restricted to the upper limit established by the state or by the parish?	Yes	No	N/A	Comment:
3. Are those in vulnerable populations (i.e., 65 or older, those with an underlying medical condition, those exhibiting symptoms, etc.) discouraged or prohibited from participating?	Yes	No	N/A	Comment:

4. Can virtual technology or other means be employed to enable those who are in vulnerable populations to participate remotely?	Yes	No	N/A	Comment:
5. Has means been developed to keep interested parties who are unable to participate in person apprised of key developments after the gathering or event?	Yes	No	N/A	Comment:
Gathering or Event Protocol				
1. Will the protocols to be enforced be communicated to all participants in advance of the gathering or event?	Yes	No	N/A	Comment:
2. Will means be employed to ensure social distancing as individuals approach and enter the location of the gathering or event?	Yes	No	N/A	Comment:
3. Will screening be provided as individuals enter the facility (e.g., invitation or reservation, the experience of symptoms, etc.)?	Yes	No	N/A	Comment:
4. Will the use of hand sanitizers be required as individuals enter the facility?	Yes	No	N/A	Comment:
5. Will non-contact greetings be enforced?	Yes	No	N/A	Comment:
6. Will the use of face coverings be required or recommended?	Yes	No	N/A	Comment:
7. Will means be provided for ensuring social distancing during the gathering or event (e.g., assigned seating, alternating rows, etc.)?	Yes	No	N/A	Comment:
8. Will the use of face coverings and social distancing be enforced during the gathering or event?	Yes	No	N/A	Comment:
9. Will the protocols in place be communicated in signage visible in the facility in which the gathering or event will take place?	Yes	No	N/A	Comment:
10. Will the protocols in place be communicated verbally at the beginning of the gathering or event?	Yes	No	N/A	Comment:
11. Will the sharing of materials (e.g., hymnals, handouts, etc.) be prohibited or minimized?	Yes	No	N/A	Comment:
12. Will the serving of food and drink be prohibited? If not, will steps be taken to ensure the safety of all who partake of the food and drink that is provided?	Yes	No	N/A	Comment:
13. Has means been developed for ensuring that social distancing will be enforced as individuals leave the gathering or event?	Yes	No	N/A	Comment:
Sanitation and Cleaning				
1. Is a protocol in place pertaining to the cleaning and sanitizing of the meeting space, common areas, and restrooms in advance of <u>and</u> following the gathering or event?	Yes	No	N/A	Comment:
2. Will steps be taken to ensure that the required cleaning and sanitation are conducted before <u>and</u> after the gathering or event takes place?	Yes	No	N/A	Comment:

Approved by: _____

Date: _____

Reconnecting with Parishioners: *Reaching Out to the Flock at Home*



Here are some ways to help you reconnect with your parishioners who haven't been to Mass in a while.

One-On-One Outreach

The most personal and effective way to reach out to parishioners is to call them directly.

-Compile a list of people you want to communicate with.

Start by reaching out to people who are not attending Mass and the homebound and then expand out.

-Follow a script for phone communication check-ins. Phone calls should be intentional and ask questions that go deeper than, "How are you?" Parishes can ask how people are doing, share how the parish could support them during this time, inform them about in-person and online liturgy opportunities and offer to pray together.

-Create a plan to collect notes. During phone calls, volunteers can take notes on what parishioners said and then follow up with them at a later date. Volunteers can also note if contact information has changed or needs to be updated. A shared online document, such as Google Sheets, can be used to keep notes.

-Empower joyful volunteers to make phone calls on behalf of the pastor. Invite parish groups and ministries to help. Invite Knights of Columbus, Knights and Ladies of Peter Claver, Knights and Ladies of the Holy Sepulcher, youth ministries, young adult ministries, Altar and Rosary Societies, and more to make calls. Volunteers should be joyful and hospitable. Volunteers don't have to leave home to make a phone call.

-Make the call! One-on-one communication is more personal than an email that's sent to the entire parish, and people are more open to an invitation if given directly to an individual. Don't be afraid to leave a message or to call back.



Large Group Connections

-Emails, Flocknote, and social media posts can be helpful to convey **short messages or important information**, such as showing the public the safety measures your parish has implemented, how to attend Mass at the parish, or sharing new guidelines regarding the dispensation.

-Video messaging works best to tell a story. Interview a parishioner about why they made the decision to come back to Mass, and post it to Facebook.

-When looking for parish information, people tend to look first to social media and then the parish website. **Make sure your web presence is updated.**

-Because of the increase in "screen fatigue," sending registered parishioners a **physical letter or postcard** in the mail might be more helpful at getting people to see information.

Accompanying Parishioners: Resources



Here are some resources to help you reconnect with and accompany your parishioners.

Webinars

The Church on Call: Accompanying Parishioners through Phone Calls during Times of Separation, co-Hosted by the Archdiocese of Washington and the Catholic Apostolate Center.

<https://adw.org/event/church-on-call>

Ways to Accompany Others During COVID-19, presented by the Catholic Apostolate Center.

<https://www.catholicapostolatecenter.org/accompaniment.html>

People, Not Programs: Forming Leaders Who Accompany, presented by Ave Maria Press.

<https://www.avemariapress.com/webinars/people-not-programs>

Mobilizing the Field Hospital: Pastoral Care and Accompaniment with Young Adults, presented by Ave Maria Press.

<https://www.avemariapress.com/webinars/mobilizing-the-field-hospital-pastoral-care-and-accompaniment-with-young-adults>

El Ministerio Durante La Crisis De Covid-19: Un Webinar Para Líderes De La Pastoral Hispana, presented by the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry.

<https://bit.ly/3ldpNTB>

Articles

Gen Z Feels Disconnected During Online Work, Worship, and School—But They're Hopeful, research by Springtide Research Institute.

<https://www.springtideresearch.org/virtual-environments-research>

50 Creative Ideas for Parishes During Covid-19, compiled by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Orange.

<https://nfcym.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/50-Creative-Ideas-for-Parishes-During-COVID-19.pdf>

Reconnecting with Parishioners: Parish Phone Call Sheet



Contacting parishioners to connect them with practical and spiritual resources is an important way to accompany parishioners when you cannot meet in person. Below is a script to guide you and your team through these important conversations.

Created by the Archdiocese of Washington, modified with permission.

1) Introduce Yourself

"Hi, my name is _____. I'm a parishioner at _____ Parish. May I speak to (name of contact)?"

➤ **Contact not available:** "Is there a better time for me to call back?"

**Write down call-back day & time. Try again at that time.*

➤ **No Answer, Leave Voicemail:**

"Hi, my name is _____. I'm a parishioner at _____ Parish.

Father _____ wants our faith community to stay connected to each other during this difficult time, so we're calling all our registered parishioners to see how they are doing and if there is anything you may need. Please feel free to call me back at (____) _____ - _____."

➤ **Contact (or another adult) is available:**

"Father _____ wants our faith community to remain connected to each other, so we're calling all our registered parishioners to see how you are doing and if there is anything you may need."

2) Ask how the parish might be able to support them

"How are you doing? Is there anything our faith community can do to support you at this time? (*listen to their response*) ...These are some of the services we can offer or connect you to:"

**List the services your parish can offer or connect parishioners to.*

"If there is something else you need we can do our best to connect you with the appropriate services."

➤ **Yes**, there is something I need.

**Note their need or request with as much detail as possible.*

➤ **No**, there is nothing I need. **Move to the next question.*

3) Ask about others in need

"Is there anyone you know, even outside the community, who is in need at this time?"

➤ **Yes** "Is it OK for us to contact them?"

➤ **Yes** "May I take down their phone number so we can reach out to them?"

➤ **No** "May I leave the parish contact information with you to pass along to them?"

➤ **No, there is nothing I need at this time.** "Is it OK if I call back in a couple of weeks?"

**Write down their name, the date they would like a call back, and the phone number to call back.*



4) End the Conversation

"We also wanted to share a reminder that public Masses have resumed with social distance considerations in place, such as wearing masks and staying 6 feet apart. If you are able to we would be so happy to welcome you back to Mass in-person. **Share parish specific details for returning to Mass.* If you are unable to join us in person, you can also join us via a live stream of Mass. **Share parish specific details.*

"Would you like to be added to our email list (Flocknote, etc.) so you get updated information and announcements from our parish?"

➤ **Yes** "May I confirm that your email address and phone number are accurate?"

➤ **No** "No problem!"

5) Offer prayer

“Before I go, do you have any specific prayer intentions we can add to our parish prayer list, or is there a friend or loved one that we can be praying for?” **Note their prayer intention and ask,*

“Can I say a quick prayer with you right before we hang up?”

➤ **Yes** **Offer the prayer listed to the right.*

➤ **No** “Okay. Thank you for talking with me today. Please feel free to contact the parish should you need anything and know that I’ll be praying for you today. Have a blessed day.”

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Lord, thank you for our parish community and the gift of this conversation. We know that you are with us in this challenging time and that you know all of our needs. In a special way, I would like to pray for (parishioner’s name) and all their loved ones and intentions [especially, (name their intention)]. Lord, we praise you for your goodness and mercy. Help us to always remember that you are with us in times of joy and sadness. Fill us with your comfort and peace. We ask this through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Thank you for speaking with me today. Please know of our continued prayers for you. Have a blessed day.

THINGS TO CONSIDER

CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING BEFORE YOUR CALLS

1. Gather a list of parishioners and phone numbers.
Make a note of which parishioners are elderly, and/or live alone, and/or who hasn’t been to Mass.
2. Recruit staff and volunteers to make phone calls.
3. Establish a system for collecting call notes and who will follow up if needed (e.g., choose one email for individual call notes to be sent to, set up an online form or sheet, etc.).
4. Distribute the call list to volunteers. Mark the priority calls at the top of each list. Include the method for volunteers to submit their call notes.
5. What practical resources is your parish able to offer?
Examples:
 - a. Information about local food distribution
 - b. Grocery delivery/medication pick-up
 - c. Access to infant items or other necessities in short supply
 - d. Information regarding short term financial assistance or how to apply for unemployment benefits (phone number of appropriate local agency)
6. What spiritual resources is your parish able to offer?
 - a. Live streamed prayer
 - b. Opportunity to set up a phone call to talk with a priest or deacon
 - c. Times for the sacrament of reconciliation
 - d. Online formation resources
7. List the practical and spiritual resources your parish offers or can connect people to, and share with your callers.
8. Share answers to frequently asked questions (at right) with your callers.

Frequently Asked Questions

“When will public Masses resume without restrictions?”

Unfortunately, we do not know. I know the Diocese of Gary is relying on the most up-to-date information from the federal and state agencies to protect parishioners and provide for their spiritual needs. As soon as we have an update, our parish will share that information with parishioners via _____.

“What do I do if I know someone who is sick and in need of the Sacraments or needs another Sacrament?”

Reconciliation at our parish is _____ or by contacting Father. If someone is in need of the Sacrament of the Sick, they should contact _____ to get in touch with Father.

(Rumor or fear) “I heard a particular parishioner or clergy person was sick. Is that true?”

People may be scared and want to discuss various rumors that they have heard. While still listening with compassion, *please do not engage in sharing rumors*, or share personal information about other parishioners.

Other questions

If you get a question and do not know the answer, please do not try to answer the question. Simply tell the person that you will get the answer and someone will get back to them. Note their question with as much detail as possible and submit it with other follow-up notes.

Accompanying Parishioners: *Hospitality*



Hospitality is a fundamental way to make people feel safe and welcome.

Invite Them

If you have a ministry or group of volunteers who can make phone calls, this is an opportunity to personally invite parishioners back to Mass, if they are not yet attending. Provide a script for your callers, and a list of FAQs.

If you do not have a ministry or a group of volunteers to do this, consider tapping into the power of those already seated in your pews. Divide your list of parishioners, pass out slips of paper with contact information and a call script, and hand them out after Mass.

Encourage Them

Offer testimonials from well-known parishioners who share why they are choosing to worship in person again. These can be highlighted on social media, included in your online bulletin, or sent in letter form to parishioners' homes.

Ease Their Minds

People want to know what safety precautions your parish is taking. Write a letter detailing everything you are doing (sanitization, social distancing, requiring face masks, etc.). Better yet, create a video specifically showing these measures in action. If you don't have video technology, you can use Facebook Live as a free and quick option. If you are livestreaming Mass, you can mention your safety protocols as an announcement before the dispensation ends.

Cultivate Familiarity

It has been seven months since some parishioners have attended Mass. When they return, they will be faced with new procedures. Upon approaching the church, they should be greeted by a familiar face. Choose people who are pillars of your church community, people everyone knows, to greet people as they enter the church to provide a sense of familiarity and reassurance.



Accompanying Parishioners: *Hospitality*



Seat Them

Since visitors and members who have been away may be unfamiliar with your seating process, they should be welcomed by ushers or greeters and shown to an appropriate seat.

Treat Them

Celebrate the fact that they are coming back to Mass! Consider a small gift such as a cellophane bag with a small bottle of hand sanitizer or wipes, a prayer card (perhaps St. Michael) and an informational sheet either containing that Sunday's readings or directing them to a Bible app they can download.

Cater to Them

For those who still cannot bear the thought of being around so many people for an hour, you might consider a "bare bones" type of Mass (no singing, a shorter homily, etc). If you have a larger space, such a school gym, you may consider using that instead of, or in addition to, your sanctuary.

Welcome Them

Before he preaches, the presider can easily introduce himself to any visitors and welcome back everyone who has made the effort to come to church for Mass. Tell them that you love them and listen to their needs. If you continue to livestream Mass, please remember to acknowledge those who are participating via livestream and let them know they are loved and missed.

Strengthen Them

For those who are already receiving the sacraments, consider making Mass and reconciliation more widely available by being innovative with the days and times they are offered throughout the week.

welcome!

Accompanying Parishioners: *Parishioners at Home*

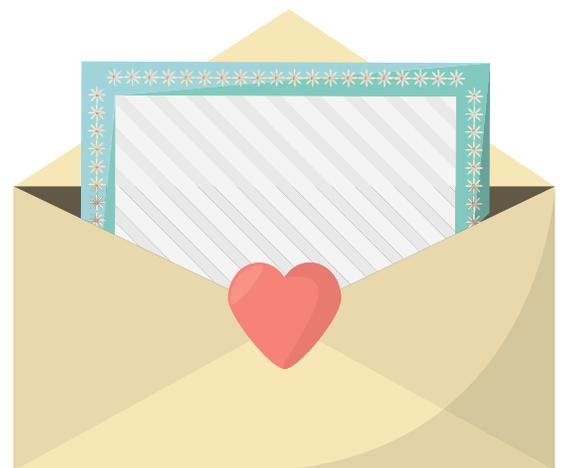


As we move forward to opening churches fully, we still need to remember those who cannot be with us in person.

Connecting with Those at Home

- **Mail a letter or a postcard to all parishioners explaining current procedures.** Give instructions on: how to sign up for Mass, how to watch a livestream (or if you don't livestream, link to the diocesan website for other options), and to let them know they are not forgotten.
- If you feel comfortable, **make "porch" visits.** Schedule a time to physically visit those at home while following social distance guidelines. Parishioners can stand by their door while you stay socially distanced.
- **Communication from the parish should be frequent,** especially if there is an update to schedules or procedures.
- **Automated phone calls** can be a helpful way to share updates.
- **Parish websites and social media should contain the most up-to-date information and be easily accessible.** For example, list new procedures on the home page of your website or "pin" a Facebook post to your parish's Facebook page.
- Be sure to **communicate sanitation procedures** to help ease anxiety. People who experience anxiety benefit from having information and a plan.

It is important to remind those who cannot be with us in person that they are not forgotten and that they are still loved by their parish families.



Accompanying Parishioners: *Wisdom that Works*



Here's some feedback from our clergy on what have been successful practices for them.

“Despite the inconvenience of Covid-19, the faithful, in my experience, still expect and want helpful preaching and joyful worship. I recommend that pastors and associates continue to plan their weekend worship with intentionality, making sure they enforce the prescribed precautions.”



“Social media outreach is important.”

“Do not have the mindset that we need to wait until the pandemic is over before we try to do anything. Work at what we can in this moment. If we wait, that will be another year before we can get back to our normal way of doing things.”

“Offer Holy Eucharist using one-way traffic flow (single inside aisle to outside aisles) and offer it to the homebound to those attending in the parking lot.”

“Keep it simple.”

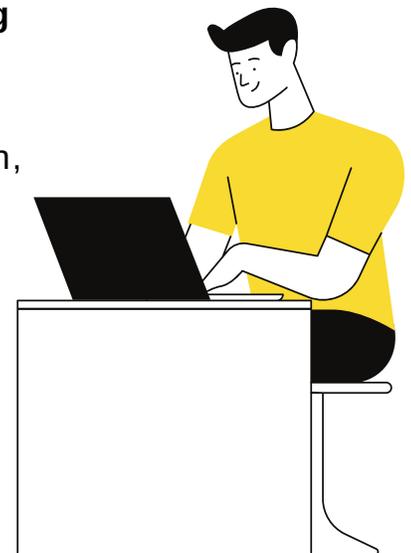
Accompanying Parishioners: Tech Tips



Since March, many parishes have learned new ways of connecting with people via technology.

Tech Tips

- When livestreaming Mass or other liturgical events, **be sure to acknowledge the people watching via livestream**. It can be as simple as, “We know you would be here in person if you could. Even though we are separated by physical distance, you are still part of our parish family.”
- **Posting the text of readings, prayers and song lyrics** to the livestream video is a great way to help those watching the stream participate from home. Consider posting a PDF of a worship aid to your parish website or link to your parish social media.
- **Create a 30-second “infomercial” video welcoming people back to Mass**. You can simply use a smart phone to capture and edit short video clips featuring parishioners who have been attending Mass in person, wearing masks, sanitizing hands, receiving Communion, explaining how to RSVP for Mass, saying “We are excited for you to come join us!” etc. If you need a hand with editing, reach out to Vanessa Negrete at the Pastoral Center at vnegrete@dcgary.org or (219) 769-9292, ext. 246.
- **Create a private Facebook group for parishioners**, where people can ask questions about returning to Mass, post prayer intentions and share information.
- **Ensure the parish website and social media platforms have current Mass times and registration procedures clearly posted**, along with a phone number or email address people can contact if they have further questions
- **Consider recording 30-second weekly video updates from the pastor** and posting to the parish website and social media and sending out via the parish Flocknote.
- **Flocknote has crated a tutorial for our diocese.** <https://bit.ly/324wW11>
Expect a call from a Flocknote representative to help you get up and running.



Accompanying Parishioners: Tech Resources



Tech Resources

- Pastoral Center (CIO Mike Sumpter at msumpter@dcgary.org and digital communications manager Vanessa Negrete at vnegrete@dcgary.org)
- Quick tutorial on how to set up a private Facebook group: <https://bit.ly/3nUJU3>
- Link to Flocknote training videos: <https://bit.ly/2FDcgFC>
- How to edit videos on an iPhone (tip: hold the phone horizontally when you record!) <https://bit.ly/3IMNuCe>
- How to create a YouTube channel and livestream to it: <https://bit.ly/3ka1ZQc>
- How to livestream to Facebook: <https://bit.ly/2T1pzCQ>



Accompanying Parishioners: *Parish Prayer Team*



As you reach out to parishioners, consider having a prayer team in place, committed to praying for all their needs.

Prayer Team Coordinators

- **Ask one or two people to coordinate** a prayer team within your parish.
- **Coordinators would be responsible** maintaining a prayer team, collecting the prayer needs of parishioners from phone calls, emails, social media, or other places, and distributing prayer requests to prayer team members.
- Coordinators should also **check in with the pastor** to see if there are any additional prayers the pray team can offer.
- Once collected, the coordinators can **distribute the prayers to the prayer team** members to pray weekly. This can be done through an email list (such as on Flocknote) or by physically handing out a list of prayers to those who don't have the internet.
- Coordinators can **check in with prayer team members** throughout the week to see if any issues arise.
- **Other ideas** can include coordinating Rosaries with each decade praying for a special intention or having prayer team volunteers send cards to those they pray for.

Prayer Team Volunteers

- **Invite parish members** to be part of a prayer team.
- **Allow this to be a flexible ministry**--the only commitment is praying each week for those you said you would.
- **Consider reaching out to all ministries** within the parish for possible volunteers and personally inviting people to join the prayer team.
- Prayer team members should remember to **keep prayer requests confidential**.

Helpful Tips

- **Create a prayer for the prayer team!** This can be a great way to help center the prayer team member when they are starting to pray for parish intentions.
- Suggest that prayer team members have a **time in their schedules** to set aside to focus on the prayers in their care.
- Work with your pastor to create a **monthly Holy Hour** for the prayer team to come together.



Accompanying Parishioners: *Parish Prayer Campaign*



Invite the entire parish to pray for those returning to Mass for Advent and Christmas.

Parish Families Pray for Each Other

- Create a **unified prayer for the parish** to say.
- **Schedule regular Holy Hours** for those who are discerning coming back to the parish after being away for so long.
- Include in the **Prayers of the Faithful** an intention for those who are preparing to come back to the parish.
- **Post prayer requests** in your parish bulletin or on social media.



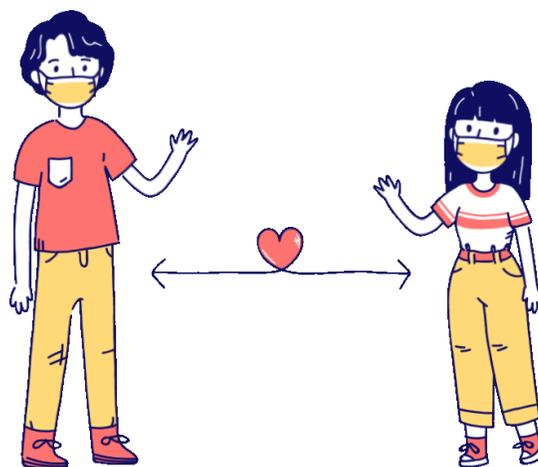
email prayer requests to pray@dcgary.org



Volunteer Tips

We recognize that this is a very hard time to recruit new volunteers for the various ministries your parish provides. Older volunteers might not want to be out around other people right now. Those with school aged children might not be able to give more of their time due to family constraints. The below suggestions can help guide you as you invite new ministry volunteers.

- **List which areas need volunteers.** This could be for liturgical ministries, hospitality, or ushers.
- **Reflect upon people or groups that could serve as volunteers**, such as teens, young adults, or parishioners who are already comfortable coming to Mass.
- **Be specific on the expectations and roles volunteers need to fulfill**, such as arriving at Mass 30 minutes early or staying after Mass.
- **Volunteers might appreciate a limited time to volunteer.** Instead of an open invitation, say, "We need volunteer hospitality ministers for Christmas Eve Mass. There will be one practice ahead of time."
- **Be prepared to answer any questions regarding parish health and safety practices.**
- **Train and equip volunteers on all health and safety practices.**
Give thanks for your volunteers! Provide them with a small token of appreciation, such as a special prayer card, to show that you appreciate all that they do for your parish.
- **Ideas and suggestions** for how to invite volunteers to serve can be found on the following page.



MINISTRY VOLUNTEERS

helping you help others

We all could use a little more help when it comes to parish ministries. Here are some key pointers to remember when thinking about volunteers.

IDENTIFY THE NEED

What are the areas in parish life that you need help with? Where are the volunteer opportunities that are available? Compile a complete list of volunteers with detailed descriptions of what a volunteer opportunity would look like if someone said yes.

POST THE POSITION

Post a complete list of volunteer opportunities on the parish website. Create a separate page that can house all volunteer opportunities in the same place for easier discovery with who to contact if they have questions. Also create a way to sign up online (such as using Google Forms).

SHARE STORIES OF OTHER VOLUNTEERS

The best advertisement for volunteer opportunities are your current volunteers! Create videos or social media posts with pictures of your volunteers and allow them to share their story of why they volunteer.

PERSONAL INVITATION

Personally reach out to people who you think would be a good volunteer! People are more likely to consider an invitation if the invitation is given directly, one-on-one to an individual.

LIST OTHER VOLUNTEER REQUIREMENTS

Have ready a list of other requirements for volunteers, such as an interview, a volunteer application, Virtus training, or additional training. When someone signs up, help walk them through the process and get them the help they need.

DISCOVER WHO THEY ARE

Interviews and conversation with prospective volunteers are helpful in discerning if this volunteer opportunity is right for the individual or if their gifts and talents could possibly be better used in other ministries.

SUPPORT THEM AS THEY SUPPORT YOU

Once they start, don't forget about your volunteers! Check in with them, see how it is going, and offer help over and over again. Never stop thanking your volunteers! Let them know they are appreciated year round and acknowledge their ministry.

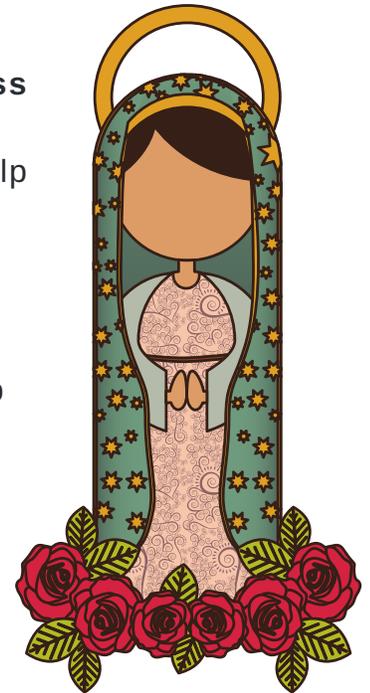
Accompanying Parishioners: *Cultural Celebrations*



As Catholics, we bring our whole being into how we worship, including our cultural traditions. Here are some suggestions and considerations when planning your parish's celebrations.

Before Events

- **Assess if your parish may need to have more than one Mass** for the celebration.
- **Create celebration plans and recruit volunteers** who can help reinforce them, such as ushers.
- **Visualize foot traffic** and create a plan for participants. For example, create a flow to help parishioners approach Our Lady of Guadalupe during Mass.
- **Consider working with local restaurants or bakeries** to help with prepackaging food for parishioners to take home after the celebration.



Musical Considerations

- **Instruments:** More than one instrument can be used at Mass (guitar, violin, etc.) so long as the 6-foot distance requirement is met. NO wind instruments or brass can be used unless there is a plexiglass shield and a distance of at least 15 feet between persons. Wind instruments and brass project saliva, sometimes forcibly. This would preclude, sadly this year, Mariachi groups because of both the forceful singing and the brass instruments. Not only would members of a Mariachi band probably not want to social distance but they would have to be at least 15 to 20 feet from the congregation.
- **Singers:** Some additional singers could sing from the choir IF they are 8 feet apart singing with masks on and at least 15 feet apart singing without masks. This same metric holds true for rehearsals as well.

Include Virtual and Remote Participants

- **Create virtual spaces** for parishioners to participate.
- **Promote livestreaming of events.**
- **Host a virtual Novenario** with different Our Lady of Guadalupe activities.
- **Post on social media** photos or posts related the celebration. Invite them to share comments or memories.

Accompanying Parishioners: *Help from Your Pastoral Center*



Do you have a specific need or question that hasn't been answered in this resource? Need someone to brainstorm with? The Diocesan Pastoral Center is here to help.

Communications Office

- Assist with print and digital messaging
- Assist with social media and using technological resources (help designing flyers and creating videos and images)
- Colleen Rabine - crabine@dcgary.org.
- Vanessa Negrete - vnegrete@dcgary.org.

Evangelization/Religious Education

- Available to assist parishes in their mission to evangelize, efforts to train and retain catechists, and support of the directors of religious education in their ministry
- Sean Martin - smartin@dcgary.org.

Finance Office

- Available to consult with parish about financial needs
- Kathy Tomasik - ktomasik@dcgary.org.

Human Resources

- Can assist parishes with employment issues such as layoffs, unemployment concerns, restructuring, employee benefits, insurance questions and access to our Employee Assistance Program.
- Through the safe environment Virtus program, can assist parishes in ensuring people are fully trained and have undergone a background check before working with children.
- Kelly Venegas - kvenegas@dcgary.org.

Intercultural & Other-Abled Ministries

- Assistance with culturally specific ministry needs
- Adeline Torres - atorres@dcgary.org.

Catholic Schools Office

- The Schools Office can assist with development of COVID Response plans and can assist with connecting you with County Health Officials concerning COVID Response
- Dr. Joe Majchrowicz - jmajchrowicz@dcgary.org.

Liturgical Commission

- Fr. Martin Dobrzynski
- Fr. Ted Mauch
- Fr. Peter Muha
- Fr. Jon Plavcan
- Deacon Mike Halas

Youth and Young Adults

- Available to help parishes with strategies on reaching out and ministering to young Catholics
- Vicky Hathaway - vhathaway@dcgary.org.

Technology Assistance

- Available to assist parishes in setting up livestreaming and other technical needs
- Consulting available for all parishes and schools in order to make software and hardware more affordable
- Mike Sumpter - msumpter@dcgary.org.

For more information, go to
www.dcgary.org or call 219-769-9292

APPENDIX

- 27 Advent/Christmas: Parish Ideas
- 28 Advent/Christmas: For Parishioners at Home Idea
- 29 Advent Prayer Calendar
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Accompanying Parishioners: *Advent/Christmas Parish Ideas*



Inspire parishioners this Advent and Christmas.

Give your parishioners a gift for Advent or Christmas.

- Small books or CDs, in English and Spanish, such as from Augustine Institute (<https://catholic.market/150>)
- Wall calendar
- Keychains
- Catholic apparel
- Decade Rosaries
- Personalized silicone bracelets
- Bumper stickers
- Personalized face masks or hand sanitizers

Create Parish Prayer Opportunities

- Share a daily Advent calendar (see next page)
- Schedule time for Adoration
- Distribute prayer cards
- Host virtual prayer groups over Zoom
- Livestream prayers, like a parish Rosary
- Invite parishioners to email pictures of their Nativity scenes and share them on the parish's social media page
- Sing Christmas carols outside (Make sure to allow for social distance)



Accompanying Parishioners: Advent/Christmas At Home Ideas



Here are some resources to celebrate at home.

Advent

St. Andrew Prayer, from EWTN.

<http://bit.ly/StAndrewPrayer>

Jesse Tree, from www.CatholicCulture.org.

<http://bit.ly/JesseTree20>

Praying the O Antiphons, from the USCCB.

<http://bit.ly/antiphons>

Advent Wreath Information, from the USCCB.

<http://bit.ly/AdventWreath20>

Advent Wreath Blessing, www.CatholicCulture.org.

<http://bit.ly/AdventWreathBlessing>



Christmas

A Christmas Prayer to Jesus, from www.OurCatholicPrayers.com.

<http://bit.ly/ChristmasPrayer1>

Blessing of a Christmas Tree, from the USCCB

<http://bit.ly/XMasTreeBlessing>

Catholic Activity: Decorating the Tree, www.CatholicCulture.org.

<http://bit.ly/XMasTreeActivity>

The Life of St. Nicholas, from the St. Nicholas Center.

<http://bit.ly/RealStNick1>

"LIGHT SHINES IN THE DARKNESS..."

- JOHN 1:5

DAILY PRAYER

(Adapted from Isaiah 9:1-6)

Loving Father, Your Word tells us, "the people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; Upon those who lived in a land of gloom a light has shone." During this Season of Advent, grant us "abundant joy and great rejoicing" as we prepare to commemorate that glorious moment when "a child is born to us, a son is given to us" —He who is called "Wonder-Counselor, God-Hero, Father-Forever, Prince of Peace." Make us ready for Christ's Second Coming where His Kingdom will be "vast and forever peaceful," as we embrace our call to be disciples and missionaries confirmed and sustained "by judgment and justice." Come, Lord Jesus, "both now and forever." Amen.



SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
29 November Be on Alert <i>Lord, help me to always be ready to welcome You.</i> Mk 13:33-37	30 St. Andrew Follow Me <i>Lord, may I be willing to leave all to follow You.</i> Mt 4:18-22	1 December Hidden Things <i>Lord, may I always be open to see and to hear You.</i> Lk 10:21-24	2 December Feel Compassion <i>Lord, may I recognize and assist those in need.</i> Mk 13:33-37	3 December Get Active <i>Lord, may I strive to do Your holy will.</i> Mt 7:21; 24-27	4 December Believe <i>Lord, may I boldly share the Good News to all.</i> Mt 9:27-31	5 December Take Heed <i>Lord, may I be ready for my appointed time.</i> Mt 9:35-10:1; 5a, 6-8
6 December Prepare the Way <i>Lord, help convert my heart to Your ways.</i> Mk 1:1-8	7 December Rise and Walk <i>Lord, may I always glorify Your goodness and mercy.</i> Lk 5:17-26	8 Immaculate Conception Favored One <i>Lord, may I always say "Yes" as Mary did.</i> Lk 1:26-38	9 December Come to Me <i>Lord, may I learn to entrust everything to You.</i> Mt 11:28-30	10 December None Greater <i>Lord, may I willingly humble myself for Your sake.</i> Mt 7:21; 24-27	11 December Seek Wisdom <i>Lord, inspire me to seek true wisdom in life.</i> Mt 11:16-19	12 Our Lady of Gaudalupe Betrothed <i>Lord, unite me closely to Your will now and always.</i> Lk 1:26-28
13 December Testify <i>Lord, may I boldly testify to Your Truth.</i> Jn 1:6-8; 19-28	14 December Authority <i>Lord, may I humbly submit to Your authority.</i> Mt 21:23-27	15 December Mind Changing <i>Lord, conform my mind to follow Your ways.</i> Mt 21:28-32	16 December Right Looking <i>Lord, help me to see and to believe in You.</i> Lk 7:18b-23	17 December Begetting It Right <i>Lord, may I embrace You as my Messiah.</i> Mt 1:1-17	18 December Righteousness <i>Lord, may I strive to be righteous in Your sight.</i> Mt 1:18-25	19 December Good News <i>Lord, tame my tongue to effectively share the Gospel.</i> Lk 1:26-38
20 December Be Not Afraid <i>Lord, may I realize nothing is impossible with You.</i> Lk 1:26-38	21 December So Blessed <i>Lord, help me to appreciate Your many blessings.</i> Lk 1:39-45	22 December Greatness <i>Lord, may all believe in Your abundant promises.</i> Lk 1:46-56	23 December Great Mercy <i>Lord, may all that I say and do testify to Your mercy.</i> Lk 1:57-66	24 December Sitting in Darkness <i>Lord, may I always be led to Your light.</i> Lk 1:67-79	25 Christmas Enlightenment <i>Lord, inspire me to seek true wisdom in life.</i> Jn 1:1-18	JOIN US FOR MASS THIS CHRISTMAS! Safe Sanitized Socially Distanced

Accompanying Parishioners: *Mask Resources*



More resources can be found at www.cdc.gov/coronavirus

General Mask Guidance from the CDC

- Wear masks with two or more layers to stop the spread of COVID-19
- Wear the mask over your nose and mouth and secure it under your chin
- Masks should be worn by people two years and older
- Masks should NOT be worn by children younger than two, people who have trouble breathing, or people who cannot remove the mask without assistance
- Do NOT wear masks intended for healthcare workers, for example, N95 respirators
- CDC does not recommend the use of gaiters or face shields. Evaluation of these face covers is on-going but effectiveness is unknown at this time.

For a full list of information or downloadable flyers to print out and post around parish or school grounds, go to:

www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/about-face-coverings.html



Accompanying Parishioners: *Health and Safety Websites*



Franciscan Health Covid Information

- www.franciscanhealth.org/covid-19

Indiana Department of Health

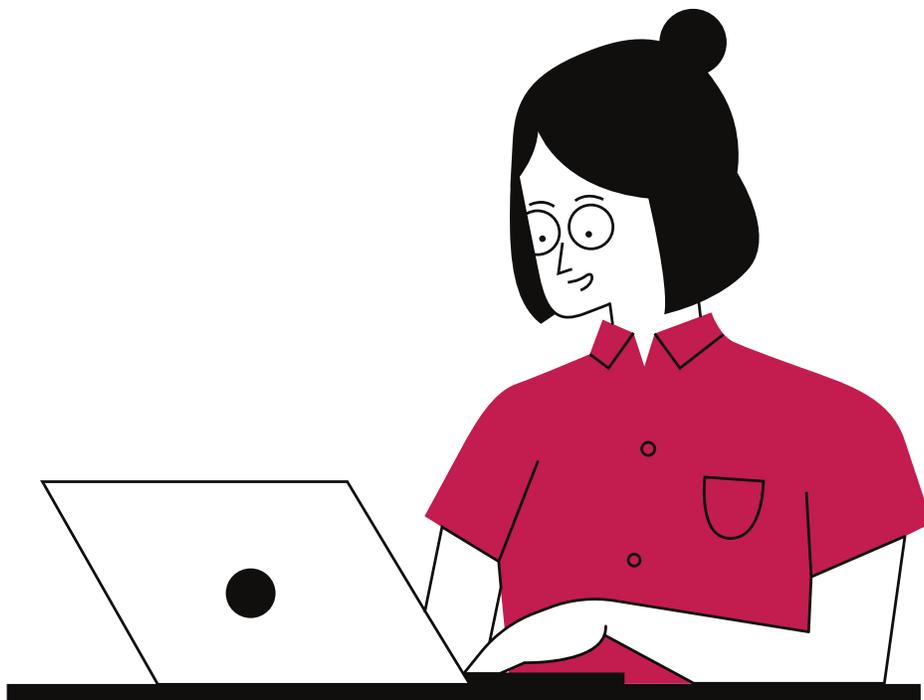
- www.coronavirus.in.gov

Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

- www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html

USCCB Covid Response

- www.usccb.org/committees/communications/covid-19



Accompanying Parishioners: *Additional Planning Resource*

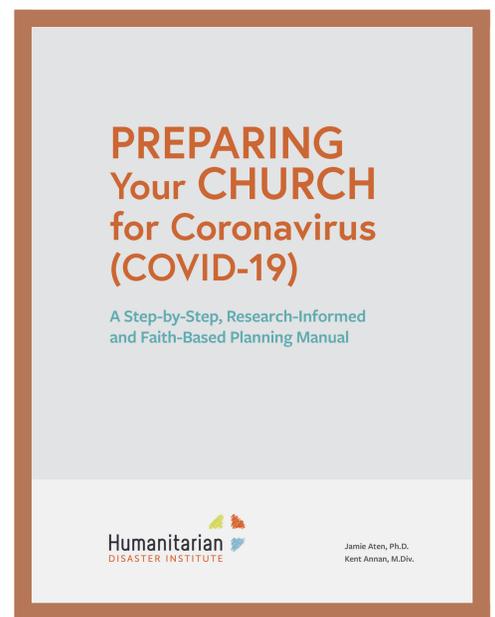


Wheaton College's Humanitarian Disaster Institute

“Preparing Your Church for Coronavirus (COVID-19) A Step-by-Step, Research-Informed and Faith-Based Planning Manual,” is a resource loaded with practical strategies to address issues you may encounter during the pandemic. Developed by the Humanitarian Disaster Institute at Wheaton College, this manual includes planning tools and templates, as well as questions to consider and concrete examples of ideas, all from a faith-based perspective.

Find the document
online by going to:

[www.reopeningthechurch.com/
preparing-your-church-for-
coronavirus-manual](http://www.reopeningthechurch.com/preparing-your-church-for-coronavirus-manual)



Accompanying Parishioners: Indiana Coronavirus Response Requirements



Beginning November 15, 2020, the Indiana Department of Health established a color-coded county map that measures weekly cases per 100,000 residents and the seven-day positivity rate for all tests completed. Each county is assigned a color based on the average of scores for the two metrics. The map is updated each Wednesday at www.coronavirus.in.gov.

The Indiana Department of Health shared response requirements that correlate with the different color and scored. Based on the score and color,

The full list of response requirements can be found at www.in.gov/gov/files/Coronavirus_Response_Requirements.pdf



CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE REQUIREMENTS, NOV. 15 TO DEC. 12

Please see complete details in Executive Order 20-48 [here](#).

Read Gov. Holcomb's remarks [here](#).

REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL HOOSIERS:

1. Face coverings are required for all Hoosiers
2. Hoosier businesses are open, with certain requirements when county metrics are in orange and red
3. Businesses of all types are required to place clearly visible signage at their public and employee entrances notifying all that face coverings are required. Businesses should only admit only those who wear face coverings and practice social distancing
4. All customers in restaurants, bars and nightclubs are required to be seated when receiving service. Individuals from non-household parties must be spaced six feet apart at tables, counters or other seating arrangements
5. Hospitals should implement evidenced-based criteria to reprioritize non-emergent procedures and surgeries to ensure sufficient capacity to care for all patients
6. Hoosier pre-K to 12 schools should consult with their local department of health and use the Indiana Department of Health metrics for decisions about in-person, hybrid and virtual operations
7. All Hoosiers are required to maintain social distancing of six feet in public spaces, whether inside or outside, and especially when with others who are not members of your immediate household
8. The Indiana Department of Homeland Security and Alcohol & Tobacco Commission, together with local partners, will continue to check businesses for occupancy, social distancing, face covering requirement and other Executive Order components to ensure compliance without financial penalty
9. Wash your hands frequently; use hand-sanitizer when hand-washing is not available
10. Do not go to work or other locations when you feel sick or symptomatic. Free COVID tests are available throughout the state
11. Hoosiers 65 and older and those with known high-risk medical conditions should remain vigilant about protecting their exposure to COVID
12. Hoosiers who will be in contact with individuals 65 and older and those with known high-risk medical conditions should consider suspending in-person visits
 - Do not visit if you are symptomatic or have received a positive COVID test
 - Wear a face covering at all times

COVID-19 COUNTY METRICS AND REQUIREMENTS

The Indiana Department of Health has established a color-coded county map that measures weekly cases per 100,000 residents and the seven-day positivity rate for all tests completed. Each county is assigned a color based on the average of scores for the two metrics. The map is updated each Wednesday at www.coronavirus.in.gov.

BLUE. The county has a point score of below 1.0 when percent positivity and new cases per 100,000 residents are combined. There is low community spread.

- All general requirements are in effect
- Social gatherings of any kind, indoors or outdoors, are limited to 250 people.
- A special, seasonal or commercial event for which more than 250 people will be in attendance, must submit a plan to the local health department at least seven days in advance of the event and receive approval before proceeding. This requirement is effective Nov. 22
- Evaluate the source of positive tests, undertake targeted testing, quarantine and isolation

YELLOW. The county has a point score of 1.0 to 1.5 when percent positivity and new cases per 100,000 residents are combined. There is moderate community spread.

- All general requirements are in effect
- Social gatherings of any kind, indoors or outdoors, are limited to 100 people.
- A special, seasonal or commercial event for which more than 100 people will be in attendance must submit a plan to the local health department at least seven days in advance of the event and receive approval before proceeding. This requirement is effective Nov. 22. Event guidance may be found in Executive Order 20-48
- Evaluate the source of positive tests, undertake targeted testing, quarantine and isolation
- Local public health officials, health care providers, elected officials, school leadership and other key local leaders must convene regularly to discuss actions that could be implemented to decrease the spread of COVID in their communities
- School officials should review plans for all extra-curricular activities and assemblies to ensure best mitigation practices are being followed

ORANGE. The county has a point score of 2.0 to 2.5 when percent positivity and new cases per 100,000 residents are combined. Community spread is approaching high levels. These requirements are in effect when a county reaches the orange metric and remain until a county moves to yellow or blue for two straight weeks. Local officials may impose further restrictions

- All general requirements are in effect. Hoosier businesses remain open
- Local public health officials, health care providers, elected officials, school leadership and other key local leaders must convene regularly to discuss actions that could be implemented to decrease the spread of COVID in their communities
- Evaluate the source of positive tests, undertake targeted testing, quarantine and isolation
- Social gatherings of any kind, indoors or outside, are limited to 50 people
- Special, seasonal or commercial events for which more than 50 people are requested to attend must submit a plan to the local health department at least seven days in advance of the event and receive approval before proceeding. College and professional sports events are included. This requirement is effective Nov. 22. Event guidance may be found in Executive Order 20-48
- Capacity in common areas and break rooms should be reduced, and users must be socially distanced
- Attendance at winter indoor K-12 extracurricular and co-curricular activities, including IHSAA sports, is limited to 25 percent capacity, in consultation with local health departments; all non-competing and non-performing participants, support personnel and attendees are required to wear face coverings at all times. All non-family groups must be socially distanced
- IHSAA football games on Friday, Nov. 20, may continue utilizing IHSAA guidance that requires local health departments and communities to determine stadium capacity. The IHSAA will work with the Marion County health department on a limited spectator plan for state championship games at Lucas Oil Stadium
- Community recreational sports leagues and tournaments may continue with attendance limited to participants, required personnel and parents/guardians only

RED. The county has a point score of 3.0 or higher when percent positivity and new cases per 100,000 residents are combined. Very high positivity and community spread. When a county is in the red metric, these requirements remain in effect until the metric has returned to orange or lower for two weeks. Local officials may impose additional restrictions

- All general requirements are in effect. Hoosier businesses remain open.
- The Indiana Department of Health will convene local public health officials, local health care providers, elected officials, school leaders and other key stakeholders to discuss actions that will be taken. State agencies will provide further support upon request
- Evaluate the source of positive tests, undertake targeted testing, quarantine and isolation
- Social gatherings of any kind, indoors or outside, are limited to 25 people
- Special, seasonal or commercial events are not advised to be held. A special, seasonal or commercial event for which more than 25 people are requested to be in attendance must submit a plan to the local health department at least seven days in advance of the event and receive approval before proceeding. College and professional sports events are included. This requirement is effective Nov. 22. Event guidance may be found in Executive Order 20-48
- Vulnerable populations should remain isolated. Social and holiday gathering participation is not advised
- All business capacity must adhere to strict social distancing guidelines; curbside pickup is preferred
- Local officials may consider limiting hours for the operation of bars, nightclubs and restaurants
- Attendance at winter indoor K-12 extracurricular and co-curricular activities, including IHSAA sports, is limited to participants, support personnel and parents/guardians. All non-competing and non-performing participants, support personnel and attendees are required to wear face coverings at all times
- IHSAA football games on Friday, Nov. 20, may continue with attendance limited to participants, support personnel and parents/guardians. The IHSAA will work with the Marion County health department on a limited spectator plan for state championship games
- Community recreational sports leagues and tournaments may continue with participants, required personnel, and parents/guardians only
- Senior center activities are suspended
- Hospitals, long-term care and other congregate settings may impose visitation limits
- Reduce the number of people in common areas and break rooms at one time

Recommendations previously were created to assist schools with decision-making. Those recommendations may be found at: https://www.coronavirus.in.gov/files/20_COVID%20color%20level%20recommendations_11-17-20.pdf