

Congregational Checklist: COVID-19 Preparedness

These steps are guidelines to assist parishes in approaching this topic and should not be construed as hard and fast rules for proceeding. Clergy and wardens should feel free to complete the checklist as best suits their needs.

- Identify someone within the parish as a Pandemic Coordinator.
- Identify the essential functions of the parish, e.g. liturgy, pastoral care, outreach, etc.
- Review any and all directives from the Bishop's Office related to COVID-19,
- Evaluate the potential impact of COVID-19 on the parish's essential functions, activities and services, identifying those that may facilitate virus spread from person to person and implementing appropriate measures to respond to the present circumstances.
- Establish online access to critical documents and information available to those holding essential positions in off-site locations, especially wardens and clergy.
- Review the organizational structure of the parish and identify positions in relation to the essential functions, including paid and volunteer positions, needed to carry on the work of the parish during a pandemic.
- Develop and maintain contact listings for those individuals providing essential functions and their back-up(s), including supply clergy.
- Develop contingency plans for essential functions, and cross-train people for essential positions so that if a person is ill, others are available to complete tasks.
- Determine the potential impact of a pandemic on outside resources that the parish depends upon to facilitate its activities, e.g. liturgical and cleaning supplies, outsourced services, etc.
- Train all parish staff, leaders and liturgical ministers in basic health procedures, such as proper hand washing techniques, cough etiquette, distribution of communion elements, etc.
- Ensure that hand washing or hand sanitizer supplies, waste receptacles, tissues are available throughout the church building; stock nurseries with disposable baby supplies.
- Plan for situations likely to require increasing, decreasing or altering the activities of the congregation, including the suspension of worship.
- Develop a communications plan for sharing key messages to the congregation, timely advising parishioners of developments and changes to established practices, and that the congregation will be following diocesan protocols and adhere to guidelines provided by local health public health units as well as emergency management agencies, including the Public Health Agency of Canada and Public Health Ontario.
- Receive advice from and/or be in contact with the local public health unit and/or other government ministries to establish safe practices for sanitizing classrooms, food handling and safety, cleansing of nursery toys and children's toys, etc.
- Encourage use of pre-authorized giving as a means of mitigating the impact of reduced attendance on the congregation's income and know how to access the parish's line of credit.
- Determine which and the quantity of supplies that will be required to promote good hygiene during a pandemic and have good amounts of these supplies on hand.
- Ensure that all those using the congregation's facilities follow the congregation's protocol.

For inquiries related to pandemic protocols, please contact your regional archdeacon and/or Archdeacon Bill Mous at bill.mous@niagaraanglican.ca.

