



## Presbytery of Coastal Carolina

*One Presbytery ~ Three Covenant Communities*

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Presbytery of Coastal Carolina,

The Executive Board of Mission Cabinet continues to monitor the guidance provided by the CDC and NCDHHS in response to the Covid pandemic. Former correspondence relaxed safety protocols based upon vaccination status. However, the increased number of Covid cases nationally and locally prompts revision. We must continue to regularly wash hands, wear masks, and maintain social distance. **Particularly we require that masks be worn for all in-door functions of presbytery.** May we continue to see these practices as ways that we “love our neighbor as we love ourselves”.

The Executive Board of The Presbytery of Coastal Carolina mandates the following regarding presbytery meetings, events, and activities in accordance with recommendations from the CDC.

- **Presbytery committees and commissions shall meet using a hybrid (virtual and in-person) model.** Gatherings shall continue to be virtual, however, chairs/moderators can determine if an in-person meeting option will also be available. Chairs/moderators must ensure participants meeting in-person are masked, wearing masks properly and meeting rooms provide sufficient space to social distance. Chairs/moderators will need to get approval from the meeting facility and discuss whether the committee/commission will be responsible for sanitizing the meeting space upon the conclusion of business. The names of in-person attendees shall be recorded for contact tracing.
- **Presbytery commissioning and installation services of pastoral voices shall be allowed.** These services shall provide a virtual option for those unable to participate in-person. All participants must wear a mask in-doors. The person being installed/commissioned may add additional Covid safety protocols. Outdoor gatherings shall either encourage masking or provide social distancing. A list of in-person participants must be kept by the congregation for contact tracing.
- **Presbytery ministries for youth and young adults allow in-person activities in accordance with safety guidelines established for presbytery youth events and according to safety protocols of the host site/conference.**

**The Executive Board of The Presbytery of Coastal Carolina continues to encourage sessions develop and enforce safety protocols based upon updated CDC and NCDHHS guidance.** See attached guidance for consideration from the Executive Board.

Blessings

Rev. Jerrod B. Lowry, General Presbyter & Stated Clerk

Additionally, the Executive Board encourages congregations to continue their ministry and mission activities and recommends that sessions consider the following list to do so safely.

1. Session must approve whether worship and other church related activities will be conducted virtually and/or in-person. Session must approve and notify members of in-person safety protocols. Session must enforce approved safety protocols.
2. Sessions that permit indoor worship should consider the following.
  - Limit touch of public surfaces. Offering plates can be placed near entrances and monitored by a designee. Invite participants to bring their own bread and juice for communion or provide pre-packaged communion cups with wafers and juice.
  - Run air conditioning 24 hours before worship. Turn off when worship begins to prevent air circulation. Also consider running air conditioning with windows open to ensure circulation.
  - Session may consider limiting in-person worship participation to a number that allows easy social distancing within the worship space. Add additional services if necessary. Consider requiring attendees RSVP to better ensure you don't exceed allowable worship numbers.
  - Remove from pews/seats items that can be touched by multiple participants (hymnals, Bibles, writing utensils, envelopes, fans, etc.).
  - Sanitize seating, doorknobs, bathrooms, and other common spaces between services.
  - Rope off pews to ensure 6 feet of separation between rows. Seating every other pew usually does not equal 6 feet of separation.
  - Provide hand sanitizer, masks, and gloves for participants that do not have their own and are unvaccinated.
  - Listen to instrumental or recorded music instead of singing congregationally. Singers/Soloist and preacher should be as far as 20 feet away from the congregation unless masked or behind plexiglass.
3. Determine what you require/mandate for outside groups (AA, NA, scouts, etc) using the facilities? Will you leave supplies and mandate the group clean their space after usage?
4. Keep the names of all worship attendees. If someone contracts COVID-19, you will need to communicate with your congregation and members who may have interacted with that individual. How will you communicate while maintaining privacy and pastoral care?
5. Update your building use agreements to reflect the new realities of COVID-19. Determine if you are also agreeing to permit facility usage for other in-person gatherings like weddings, funerals, anonymous groups, etc.
6. Remember that "Christ is Lord of the conscience". Neither those that participate nor those that refuse to participate in in-person worship are to be judged. Session can decide to provide facilities for in-person gatherings. Individual members and pastoral voices can choose whether to participate in person. Session should make "reasonable accommodation" for pastoral voices that excuse themselves from participating in-person for in-person worship.