

Beloved in Christ,

ECMN is now implementing a process, modeled after many other dioceses across the church, that will help us to prepare to safely reopen our buildings to work, ministry, and worship, and to do so while staying in conversation with one another as we move through the next 12-18 months of life during this pandemic.

As we live into this new normal, the complexity of the terrain we are traversing continues to reveal itself. The realities of our different contexts, building sizes, and local infection rates mean that a one-size-fits-all approach to whether and how we gather in person is not helpful. And while, based on everything we know about the virus and how it spreads, it is still the safest and best option to gather outdoors or virtually, we know that the window for gathering outdoors is limited here in Minnesota.

I want to continue to trust and respect the faithful leadership all of you are exercising locally, and at the same time be diligent in my responsibility to provide you with support you need as we move forward.

I encourage everyone to continue to move forward as slowly and cautiously as possible. Even where in-person gatherings are permitted, some faith communities may discern that their congregation will be better served by continuing to gather virtually. And when a faith community does discern that reopening buildings is the right next step, we know that it is safer to move through this process slowly, reopening one ministry at a time, rather than all at once. This is why we've determined to break up the reopening process into two distinct phases. More information on that can be found below.

### **Changes to this Document Since Previous Version (June 23rd, 2020)**

- We'll be looking at the 7-day positivity rate as our metric for how we'll determine which phase ECMN and individual faith communities are in.
- The Building Use Task Force will accept plans for reopening church buildings in two phases.
- Appendix A has been transformed into a metric that can be used to create a reopening plan for your faith community.
- Additional clarification and best practices have been added to Appendix G for the practice of the Eucharist once faith communities return to in-person worship.

### **Positivity Rate**

The positivity rate refers to the percentage of COVID-19 tests that come back positive each day. The positivity rate has emerged as a useful metric to understand the rate of COVID-19 spread in a community. The reason for looking at a 7-day rather than 1-day positivity rate is that it can provide a better indicator of how numbers and case rates are trending over time. The best way to find this metric is through the Minnesota Department of Health. They release a weekly report,

which includes the county-level positivity rates, and can be found here:

<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/stats/index.html> (on this page, you can find a pdf with graphics on page 8 for weekly positivity rate by county, and can also download an Excel file that provides several weeks of 7 day rolling average positivity rates to better understand trending by county).

Phase	Health Characteristics
Phase 1	Governor's Stay at Home Order
Phase 1.5	7-day positivity rates of the state and/or county have trended over 5%
Phase 2	7-day positive rates of the state and county have both trended under 5%
Phase 3	Negative Community Spread

## Reopening Church Buildings in Phase 1.5

As of August 18th, 2020, all in ECMN are still in Phase 1.5 of our Re-Gathering Plan. This means that the 7-day positivity rates are trending at or above 5% for either the state or county.

During Phase 1.5, the Building Use Task Force will now consider plans for the **reopening of church buildings for use by clergy, church employees, volunteers and businesses or organizations operating in church buildings.**

The Guidelines for [Phase 1.5](#) have been updated with more specific information.

## Reopening Church Buildings in Phase 2

As we look ahead and prepare to move to Phase 2, we will shift our focus to the positivity rates of both the state and county in which a faith community is situated. In order to be considered in Phase 2, the 7-day positivity rates of the state AND county must *both* have trended under 5%. This means that some faith communities will likely move to Phase 2 before others based on the prevalence of COVID-19 in their counties.

When a faith community is considered in [Phase 2](#), the Building Use Task Force will consider plans for **opening buildings for ministries, outside groups, and limited capacity in-person worship.**

## Planning Metrics and Supports for Faith Communities

To support the creation of a plan for opening buildings, Appendix A of this document has been modified and now functions as a planning matrix. I invite you to use this matrix to create your plans for each phase of reopening your building.

Each faith community should follow this process to create their plan for reopening:

- Engage in discernment as a faith community (even if you can re-open, there are very good reasons why you may choose not to).
- Consult with all faith community leadership in crafting and approving your plan.
- Outside groups and businesses who use your building need to be part of your overall planning process and agree to abide by whatever safety protocols you create.
- Each submitted plan must have the approval of the clergyperson/warden and the Bishop's Committee or Vestry.
- [Use this form \(https://bit.ly/ecmnplan\)](https://bit.ly/ecmnplan) to submit your plan to the Building Use Task Force for review. This form will ask you to identify a main contact person.
- A representative of the Building Use Task Force will review the plan and may reach out to your contact person for clarification or to recommend further planning in a specific area.
- The Task Force will send you a message if and when they think your plan appropriately accounts for all necessary areas of safety.

I invite you all into a process of thoughtful and intentional discernment. To that end, I offer this guide for how a faith community might move through the process of discernment:

- **Build a team of leaders** to discern a path forward and create a plan. Think about the ministries and activities that occur in your faith community. Having leaders from these groups involved can help make sure the plan is comprehensive.
- **Let values lead.** Consider the values of your faith community and how those values can guide you as you approach this process of discernment and planning.
- Ask yourselves, **what is going well in this season** of physical distancing? Then ask the question, what are we longing for? How can you plan in order to meet those longings, rather than simply returning to what was? How can you keep what's going well as you return to in-person gathering?
- Get to **know the numbers** as it relates to COVID-19 and your community. What unique characteristics of your community might influence those numbers over time (an influx of tourists over the summer and fall, students on college campuses, etc.)?
- **Check in with your members.** Consider creating a survey or some other method of checking in with members of your faith community to determine their level of comfort with potential plans for re-gathering in person and indoors, or for particular ministries to be opened.
- **Plan for flexibility.** A lot can change from one day to the next. There is no guarantee that the process of reopening will be linear, so how can your plan take that need for flexibility into account? How might you respond if your faith community building needs to close again? How will that be discerned and communicated?

My prayers are with all of you. I understand that this plan will not answer every question or account for every circumstance, so let's see this as a further invitation to relationship and

conversation as we remain thought partners in sorting through all of the complexity that this season brings. I, your missioners, and the Building Use Task Force are all here to support you on this journey.



**The Right Reverend Craig Loya**  
 X Bishop, Episcopal Church in Minnesota

*If you have any questions or concerns in planning, please reach out to Rachel Babbitt, who is the first point of contact for the Building Use Task Force. You can reach her at [rachel.b@episcopalmn.org](mailto:rachel.b@episcopalmn.org).*

**Table of Contents**

- [Phase 1: The Blizzard](#) ..... 5
- [Phase 1.5: The Blizzard, after the plow comes through](#) ..... 5
- [Phase 2: The Long Winter](#) ..... 6
- [Phase 3: Spring](#) ..... 7
- [Phase 4: Summer Growth and Transformation](#) ..... 7
- [Appendix A: Planning Matrix for Reopening Church Buildings](#) ..... 8
- [Appendix B: Ideas](#) ..... 12
- [Appendix C: Should I Open This Ministry?](#) ..... 14
- [Appendix D: Cleaning Best Practices](#) ..... 15
- [Appendix E: Sample Plan to Return to Church Offices](#) ..... 17
- [Appendix F: Financial Resources](#) ..... 22
- [Appendix G: Best Practices for Liturgies & Pastoral Care](#) ..... 23
- [Appendix H: Sources](#) ..... 26
- [Appendix I: Outdoor Gatherings](#) ..... 27

**Definition of Terms**

In order to ensure an abundance of clarity, here is how we’re using and understanding the following terms.

**Phase:** This term refers to the level of restriction that we are currently exercising given the current infection rate and governmental protocols in place.

**Health Characteristics:** These are the Minnesota-specific health and safety metrics that dictate which phase we are in.

**Faith Community Guidelines:** These are directives, given to you by your Bishop, that must be followed during this phase.

**Actions/Questions to Consider as we prepare for the next season:** These are questions that can and should be engaged by faith community leaders in order to prepare for the phase to come.

**ECMN Building Use Task Force:** This task force provides insight and input into policies regarding building use for ECMN and faith communities, and will support the review of faith communities' plans to reopen buildings. Members of the task force are The Rev. Tim Kingsley, Mike Reymann, The Rev. Joy Caires, Dr. David J. Inwards, Rachel Babbitt, Ellice Chelgren, and Bishop Loya. Others will be consulted (including additional medical professionals and subject matter experts) as needed.

## Phase 1: The Blizzard

A blizzard involves a temporary and nearly complete shutdown. We enter Phase 1 when the Governor puts in place an order calling Minnesotans to Stay at Home.

### *Health Characteristics*

- Virus is continuing to spread at increasing rates in many communities.
- Governor's Stay-at-Home order is in place.
- No vaccine or treatment is available.
- Lack of protective supplies for the public.
- Current hospital capacity unable to meet demand.

### *Faith Community Guidelines*

- Offer virtual worship.
- Provide pastoral care virtually.
- Postpone weddings, funerals, and other celebrations.
- Buildings are closed to everyone.

## Phase 1.5: The Blizzard, after the plows come through

After the Stay-at-Home order has been lifted, but before we have entered into Phase 2, if safety precautions are followed, the following is permitted for faith communities.

### *Health Characteristics*

- Governor has lifted Stay-at-Home orders.
- The 7-day positivity rates of the state and/or county have trended over 5% ([click here](#) to learn more about the positivity rate).
- Communities are still experiencing widespread and increasing infection rates.

### *Faith Community Guidelines*

- Buildings can be opened for use by clergy, church employees, volunteers and businesses and/or organizations that use church buildings so long as a comprehensive safety plan has been created, approved by faith community leadership, and submitted to and evaluated by the Building Use Task Force (see Appendix [A](#) and [E](#)).
- All other in-person groups and gatherings continue to be suspended until further notice.
- Faith Communities may gather and practice the Eucharist outdoors, provided they follow safety precautions outlined in [Appendix I](#).
- Weddings, funerals, and baptisms that cannot be postponed may take place, as long as they are gatherings of 10 people or less, follow physical distancing guidelines, and all in attendance wear masks.
- Those who are sick, those who have underlying health conditions, and those who are over the age of 65 should not be required to re-gather in any form or fashion.

## **Phase 2: Long Winter**

Winter involves adapting to a new way of living over an extended period of time. This involves the initial stages of returning to our buildings and to physical gatherings, but will look very different than the ways we gathered before the pandemic.

Please review the process outlined in [Appendix A](#) before reopening church buildings.

### *Health Characteristics*

- The 7-day positivity rates of the state and county in which you are located have both trended under 5% ([click here](#) to learn more about the positivity rate).
- Hospital capacity is adequate to treat all patients requiring inpatient care.
- Increased testing for COVID-19 is available.
- The state is able to conduct contact tracing for new cases.

### *Faith Community Guidelines*

- Wearing masks, maintaining physical distancing, and handwashing must be adhered to.
- Buildings can be opened for ministries, outside groups, and limited capacity in-person worship so long as a comprehensive safety plan has been created, approved by faith community leadership, and submitted to and evaluated by the Building Use Task Force (see Appendix [A](#) and [E](#)).
- Clergy and church employees may continue to work from home if they choose.
- Those who are sick, those who have underlying health conditions, and those who are over the age of 65 should not be required to re-gather in any form or fashion.
- Funerals, weddings, and similar gatherings may resume in accordance with current health and safety guidelines (i.e. size of gathering, physical distancing, wearing masks).
- In-person pastoral visits may resume to low risk parishioners as needed.

- Larger gatherings will still be conducted virtually.

**Any increased outbreak of the virus might mean returning to Phase 1 protocols.**

## **Phase 3: Spring**

We do not expect Phase 3 to arrive for some time. According to many experts, this might be as far as eighteen months away.

### *Health characteristics*

- Negative community spread
- Mass vaccination
- Mass testing for virus and immunity
- Lifting of physical distancing

### *Faith Community Guidelines*

- Offices are fully open
- Worship in congregations
  - Continue to provide virtual options
  - Continue to provide virtual meeting options
  - Holy Eucharist is offered
- Resume outreach ministries
- Continue formation programs
- ECMN meetings resume in person, but continue to provide virtual options

## **Phase 4: Summer growth and transformation**

As we emerge into something that we recognize as “normal,” we will want to continue to reflect on what we have learned together about ways the church can continue to adapt our common life to best engage God’s mission in a changing world going forward. Additionally, it will be important to reflect on ways we can be prepared should another pandemic occur sometime in the future.

## Appendix A

### Planning Matrix for Reopening Church Buildings

Being clear *why* you're reopening specific parts of your faith community, worship, or ministry is important. Being clear on your "why" will help you to determine what actions make the most sense for your faith community.

*If you have any questions or concerns in planning, please reach out to Rachel Babbitt, who is the first point of contact for the Building Use Task Force. You can reach her at [rachel.b@episcopalmn.org](mailto:rachel.b@episcopalmn.org).*

### Sample Plans

St. Mark's Cathedral in Minneapolis has developed a comprehensive plan that can be used as a model to get started. [It can be found here.](#)

Additionally, the Building Use Task Force drafted a plan to reopen the ECMN Offices during Phase 1.5. You can find this plan in [Appendix E](#).

### The Process:

- Consult with all faith community leadership in crafting and approving your plan. It's important that any outside groups and businesses who use your building are part of your overall planning process and agree to abide by whatever safety protocols you create.
- Each submitted plan must have the approval of the clergyperson/warden and the Bishop's Committee or Vestry.
- **Once approved by the Bishop's Committee or Vestry, but before reopening, please submit your plan to the Building Use Task Force here: <https://bit.ly/ecmnplan>.** This form will ask you to identify a main contact person.
- A representative of the Building Task Force will review the plan and may reach out to your contact person for clarification or to recommend further planning in a specific area.
- The Task Force will send you a message if and when they think your plan appropriately accounts for all necessary areas of safety.

Once you choose to begin reopening, please remember that it is safer to re-open slowly. Rather than all indoor worship and ministries opening at once, we recommend that you consider following the phased re-opening process outlined below.

### Reopening Church Buildings in Phase 1.5

As of August 18th, 2020, all in ECMN are still in Phase 1.5 of our Re-Gathering Plan. This means that the 7-day positivity rates are trending at or above 5% for either the state or county ([click here](#) to learn more about the positivity rate).



During Phase 1.5, the Building Use Task Force will now consider plans for the **reopening of church buildings for use by clergy, church employees, volunteers, and businesses or organizations operating in church buildings.**

The Guidelines for [Phase 1.5](#) have been updated with more specific information.

## Reopening Church Buildings in Phase 2

As we look ahead and prepare to move to Phase 2, we will shift our focus to the positivity rates of both the state and county in which a faith community is situated. In order to be considered in Phase 2, the 7-day positivity rates of the state AND county must have both trended under 5% ([click here](#) to learn more about the positivity rate).

When a faith community is considered in [Phase 2](#), the Building Use Task Force will consider plans for **opening buildings for ministries, outside groups, and limited capacity in-person worship.**

## Discernment

- **Build a team of leaders** to help as you discern a path forward and create a plan. Think about the ministries and activities that occur in your faith community. Having leaders from these groups involved can help make sure the plan is as comprehensive as possible.
- **Let values lead.** Consider the values of your faith community and how those values can guide you as you approach this process of discernment and planning.
- Ask yourselves **what is going well in this season** of physical distancing? Then ask the question, what are we longing for? How can you plan in order to meet those longings, rather than simply returning to what was? How can you keep what's going well as you return to in-person gathering?
- **Get to know the numbers.** What unique characteristics of your community might influence those numbers over time (an influx of tourists over the summer and fall, students on college campuses, etc.)?

## Planning for All

As you plan for opening your building, please take time to consider the following:

- What are the demographics of your faith community?
- How might your plan be shaped by the health risks to specific groups?
- How can you continue to offer online services and gatherings for those who are most vulnerable and will still not be able to gather physically?
- How can you help people make choices about when to stay home?
- How can you continue to reach out and support those who must continue sheltering in place, beyond offering worship services virtually?

## Reopening church buildings for office and ministry use

---

[Click here for resources from the CDC](#), which provide guidance for many of the areas of planning listed below.

For faith community staff and volunteers to return to offices, for the resumption of tenant business or organizational operations of partners using the church building, or for the return of ministries to the church building, please make plans for the following:

- The spaces and rooms that will be used, and those that will remain closed.
- A capacity limit in any given room and in the church building at large.
- Entrance and exit of staff, volunteers, and faith community members when using the church building to prevent bottle-necking.
- Tenants' entrance, exit, and overlapping use of space in the church building (i.e. walkways, bathrooms, kitchen, etc.).
- Communicating safety guidelines and expectations to all those who will be allowed into the spaces.
- A screening protocol to determine if those allowed to use the space are healthy (the Minnesota Department of Health recommends [this screening tool](#)).
- Signage with clear explanations of safety protocols and expectations for anyone using the space regarding:
  - Physical distancing
  - Wearing masks in common spaces
  - Washing hands thoroughly and often
  - Staying away if exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19
- The regular cleaning of bathrooms and common spaces.
- Cleaning protocols for spaces and rooms between usage that abide by COVID-19 cleaning standards (see [Appendix D](#)).
- A system to track who has used the space and when (for contact tracing).
- A communication protocol for those using the space, should someone test positive for COVID-19.
- Assessing, and if necessary, improving, the building ventilation to ensure it is in proper working order.
- Decide which ministries need to meet in-person and what can stay virtual (see [Appendix C](#))

## Reopening church buildings for indoor worship

As faith communities plan to return to in-person indoor worship, the following should be planned for:

- Limiting capacity of worship spaces to allow for physical distancing (6 feet or more between individuals/families who live together).
- Ensuring maximum capacity is not exceeded during service. See [Appendix B](#) for ideas.
- Safety protocols and expectations for those using the space regarding:
  - Physical distancing
  - Wearing masks in common spaces

- Washing hands thoroughly and often
- Staying away if exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19
- Communicating safety guidelines and expectations to all those who will be coming to worship.
- Removal of and substitutes for commonly touched items (Hymnals, Bibles, etc.)
- Safety protocols for liturgical elements of the service, including Holy Eucharist (find resources in [Appendix G](#)).
- A system to track who has used the space and when (contact tracing).
- A communication protocol for those using the space, should someone test positive for COVID-19.
- Entrance and exit of the space during and throughout worship to prevent bottlenecks.
- Sanitization of:
  - Individuals' hands
  - Door handles
  - Pews/chairs
  - Bathrooms
  - Nurseries/Sunday School rooms
- Hospitality and greeting in a no-touch environment (propping doors open, ensuring all those who enter know the safety protocols and what to expect, preventing congregating indoors after service).
- Cleaning before and after each gathering to abide by COVID-19 cleaning standards (see [Appendix D](#)).

### **Follow-up and evaluation**

- Where will you keep this plan?
- How will it be accessible to those who need it?
- How will this plan be re-visited over time (after 2, 4, 8 weeks)?
- How will you assess how the safety protocols are working?
- What are you learning about yourselves as leaders that you want to take with you to the next phase?
- How are you addressing cross-training if someone becomes sick? How can essential duties be performed if one or more people are ill? What is the plan to scale back what needs to be done if there are not adequate volunteers to do the work? [This document can help plan for that.](#)
- How will you address the possible increase of workload for leaders when in-person worship/ministry *and* virtual programming are underway?
- How might you take the lessons you have learned about virtual programming and online offerings into your continued work?

### **Regression in phases**

- Who will determine, and how, that the church building needs to be closed?
- How will you communicate that your building or ministry is no longer open?

## Appendix B

### Ideas

#### **Limit Gathering Size**

While gathering sizes are limited, consider creating a sign-up, breaking groups up by last name, or creating an online 'ticket' to separate households and ensure the number of individuals in the space at a given time is limited.

#### **Passing the Peace**

Consider waving, bowing, crossing your hands over your heart, or versicle and response.

#### **Collecting Offerings**

Consider placing an offering plate or secure box at the doors to the worship space. Continue to offer online giving if possible. Do not pass a plate or basket during the worship service.

#### **Fellowship Time**

Gathering before and after services should be discouraged. You could offer an informal 'fellowship time' online on Sundays for conversation both for those who gathered in person and for those unable to gather in person in this phase. If you do have a fellowship time, do not serve food. If the situation permits, encourage any conversation to occur outside while maintaining physical distancing.

#### **Virtual Worship**

Consider a hybrid model in which services that take place in-person are also live-streamed. In this case, it would be helpful to think about how those engaging online can be participating in the service (i.e. type your greetings at the beginning of the stream, type your response, type your passing of the peace, etc.). Formation, Bible study, and small groups could continue to happen in a virtual environment, while a faith community begins offering some in-person worship services and gatherings. Remember, the most vulnerable will need to continue physical distancing, and ensuring that these individuals have equal access to formation, worship, and community is essential.

#### **Touchless Worship**

Create a bulletin that contains all the items needed for the worship. Remove the Bibles, hymnals, and other commonly touched items throughout the space. Prop open doors and create one-way paths to allow distance. If creating a paper bulletin is too costly, time-consuming, or wasteful, consider projecting worship slides.

**Greeter role**

Create a space for the greeter to remain 6 feet from the entryway. Include propping open doors in the greeter's responsibilities. Have a table near the entry where bulletins are placed, and have the greeter invite people to pick up the bulletin themselves.

**Sanitizing Hands/Use of Gloves**

Wearing gloves is discouraged, as they can actually spread the virus from one place to another. Instead, all those who touch common surfaces are advised to wash their hands regularly and should have access to hand sanitizer. Have all clergy wash hands prior to service and use hand sanitizer regularly while officiating a service.

**Choir**

Singing, particularly indoors, can act as a particularly effective method to spread the virus, so singing indoors is discouraged at this time. If you must have singing, consider having only a soloist, and plan for considerable distancing between the singer and others in the congregation.

**Contact Tracing**

Determine a way to track who has been in the building and where in the building they went. This will be important if someone becomes sick. You may use an online form for people to sign up with when and where they will be in the building. Be sure to capture emails or phone numbers in case someone becomes sick. Anyone who has been in contact with an infected person will need to be notified.

**Cleaning protocols**

Create a set of procedures for cleaning trafficked areas after each use. Wipe down surfaces that may have been touched, mop floors, and follow the suggestions from the CDC.

**High-Risk Members and Employees**

There are a number of factors that can put someone in a high risk category. Consider asking high risk individuals, those with underlying health conditions, and/or those over 65 years of age to continue to physical distance and provide specific ways for them to participate while mitigating their risk.

## Appendix C

### Should I open this ministry?

*Use this worksheet to help determine if a particular ministry can or should be opened during a given phase of the COVID-19 pandemic.*

THIS WORKSHEET SHOULD BE USED WHEN ECMN HAS ENTERED INTO PHASE TWO OR BEYOND.

Does this meeting or ministry need to occur in-person to better serve the people participating?

Is this ministry or partnership urgent or essential to people's needs?

Can we follow all of the proper safety protocols during this meeting or ministry (6 feet apart, masks, sanitation)?

Do all those attending this meeting or ministry have access to a mask? If no, will you provide masks?

Can a rigorous cleaning protocol be implemented before and after the meeting or ministry?

Will you be able to create a screening process for participants to complete before they enter the space (temperature check, confirm they have no symptoms, etc..)?

Will you prevent high-risk individuals (over 65 and/or with health issues) from participating in the meeting or ministry? Can you create a virtual method for these individuals to participate?

-----

If you have answered YES to ALL of the above statements, then you should consider reopening this ministry to in-person gatherings. Please see [Appendix A](#) to complete the appropriate questions for opening your building.

## Appendix D

### Cleaning Best Practices

If you have deemed it appropriate for a ministry to resume in-person gatherings based on the 'Should I open this ministry?' worksheet, please use this tool to plan how to clean surfaces and areas after use. For more information, please visit the Center for Disease Control page: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html>

#### Cleaning questions to consider in making a plan:

- Who will be in the room and when?
- Can we clean it between uses by different groups?
- Who is assigned to clean? Are they, or is anyone they're in contact with, high-risk?
- What is the process for cleaning?
- Do we have adequate access to CDC-approved cleaning materials?

#### Minnesota Department of Health Guidance

(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/clean.html>)

The virus that causes COVID-19 is mainly spread by respiratory droplets. When someone infected with COVID-19 coughs, sneezes, sings, or speaks, respiratory droplets that contain the virus are expelled and can be breathed in by someone nearby. Although the virus cannot enter the body through the skin, the respiratory droplets carrying the virus can get into your airways or mucous membranes of your eyes, nose, or mouth and infect you. The virus can also be spread if you touch a surface contaminated with the virus and then touch your eyes, nose, or mouth, although this is not the primary way the virus spreads.

#### Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting

Routine cleaning and disinfecting is key to maintaining a safe environment.

- *Cleaning* removes dirt and most germs and is usually done with soap and water.
- *Disinfecting* kills most germs, depending on the type of chemical used, and only when the chemical product is used as directed on the label.

#### Routine Cleaning and Disinfecting

- Clean and disinfect at least daily (or more, depending on use patterns) frequently touched surfaces and objects such as:
  - Door knobs and handles
  - Desks, tables, and chairs
  - Countertops
  - Handrails
  - Light switches
  - Handles on equipment
  - Push-buttons on vending machines and elevators

- Shared toys
- Shared remote controls
- Shared telephones
- Shared computer keyboards and mice

Note: computer keyboards are difficult to clean. Shared computers should have signs posted instructing proper hand hygiene before and after using them to minimize disease transmission. To facilitate cleaning, consider using covers that protect the keys, but enable use of the keys.

It is not necessary to routinely apply disinfectants to surfaces that are not high-touch or high-risk (e.g. floors, bookcases, tops of filing cabinets). Soft surfaces such as carpets, rugs, drapes can be cleaned using soap and water or a cleaner appropriate for the material.



## Appendix E

### Sample Plan for Reopening church offices

The ECMN Offices will re-open at 50% capacity during Phase 1.5. Find below the plan that was developed by the Building Use Task Force, modeled after the template offered by the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development.

Please reach out to your Missioner for Administration, Ellice Chelgren, with questions, at [ellice.c@episcopalmn.org](mailto:ellice.c@episcopalmn.org).

### ECMN COVID-19 Preparedness Plan

This plan lays out the protocols that will govern the ECMN Missioners and Bishop as they return to working in the offices during the COVID-19 pandemic. These protocols will be posted in the ECMN Offices and shared with all Missioners and the Bishop.

ECMN is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace for all Missioners and the Bishop. To ensure that we have a safe and healthy workplace, we have developed the following COVID-19 Preparedness Plan in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Missioners and the Bishop are all responsible for implementing this plan. Our goal is to mitigate the potential for transmission of COVID-19 in our workplaces and communities, and that requires full cooperation. Only through this cooperative effort can we establish and maintain the safety and health of all persons in our workplaces.

The COVID-19 Preparedness Plan is administered by The Rt. Rev. Craig Loya, who maintains the overall authority and responsibility for the plan. However, all Missioners are equally responsible for supporting, implementing, complying with, and providing recommendations to further improve all aspects of this COVID-19 Preparedness Plan.

ECMN's COVID-19 Preparedness Plan follows the industry guidance developed by the state of Minnesota, which is based upon Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) guidelines for COVID-19, Minnesota Occupational Safety and Health Administration (MNOSHA) statutes, rules and standards, and Minnesota's relevant and current executive orders. It addresses:

- ensuring that sick workers stay home and prompt identification and isolation of sick persons;
- social distancing – workers must be at least six feet apart;
- workplace building and ventilation protocol;
- workplace cleaning and disinfection protocol;
- drop-off, pick-up, and delivery practices and protocol; and
- communications and training practices and protocol.

ECMN has reviewed and incorporated the industry guidance applicable to our business provided by the state of Minnesota for the development of this plan, including guidance specifically for faith communities, places of worship, weddings, and funerals.

**Ensure sick workers stay home and prompt identification and isolation of sick persons**

Missioners and the Bishop are encouraged to self-monitor for signs and symptoms of COVID-19. Prior to arriving in the office, they are encouraged to answer yes/no as to whether each of the following symptoms are currently present:

- fever or feeling feverish
- chills
- a new cough
- shortness of breath
- a new sore throat
- new muscle aches
- new headache
- new loss of smell or taste

If a missioner or the bishop find any of these symptoms present, they will stay home, stay away from other people, and contact their health care provider.

**Self-health check:** By entering the workplace, a missioner or the Bishop is representing that they are healthy enough to be at work per CDC guidelines. Missioners and the Bishop should take their temperature each day. Those with symptoms or those who do not feel well should contact their manager and not come to work. Missioners should also inform the Bishop and stay home if they receive a confirmed COVID-19 diagnosis from a positive medical test or a medical diagnosis from their health care provider. Anyone who is concerned that another is displaying symptoms should speak to the Bishop in a private space. The individual displaying symptoms may be required to again complete the symptoms check process and may be sent home, if appropriate.

ECMN has leave and work from home policies and common practices that promote workers staying at home when they are sick, when household members are sick, or when required by a health care provider to isolate or quarantine themselves or a member of their household.

For any Missioner or the Bishop who has any type of vulnerability, lives with someone with a vulnerability, or does not feel comfortable coming into the office for any other reason, they are exempt from being in the office, and can continue to work from home as long as they deem necessary.

If a Missioner or the Bishop exhibits symptoms of COVID-19, they will self-isolate and seek testing. If they test positive, they will inform the team (using slack), and will refrain from visiting

the office. We will utilize these protocols to determine when to return to the office:

<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/returntowork.pdf>

ECMN will utilize the Missioner in-office calendar to track days that they have been in the office. In the case that someone tests positive, those who have been in the office with that individual in the 2 days prior to testing positive will follow self-isolation practices and will need to test negative before returning to work.

In addition, a policy has been implemented to protect the privacy of workers' health status and health information.

### **When someone in the ECMN Offices tests positive for COVID-19**

COVID-19 Positive, Symptomatic: those who have home-isolated under these circumstances may leave home under the following conditions:

If you have NOT had a test to determine if you are still contagious, you can leave home after these three things have happened:

- You have had no fever for at least 72 hours (that is three full days of no fever without the use of medicine that reduces fevers);
- Other symptoms have improved; and
- At least 10 days have passed since your symptoms first appeared.

If you have had a test to determine if you are still contagious, you can leave home after you have received two negative tests in a row, at least 24 hours apart. Your doctor will follow CDC guidelines.

COVID-19 Positive, Asymptomatic: those who have home isolated under these circumstances may leave home under the following conditions:

If you have NOT had a test to determine if you are still contagious, you can leave home after these two things have happened:

- At least 10 days have passed since the date of your first positive test AND
- you continue to have no symptoms (no cough or shortness of breath) since the test.

If you have had a test to determine if you are still contagious, you can leave home after you have received two negative tests in a row, at least 24 hours apart. Your doctor will follow CDC guidelines.

Note: if you develop symptoms, follow guidance above for people with COVID19 symptoms.

\*\*In all cases, follow the guidance of your doctor and local health department. The decision to stop home isolation should be made in consultation with your healthcare provider and state and

local health departments. Some people, for example those with conditions that weaken their immune system, might continue to shed virus even after they recover.

For any additional questions about your symptoms or care, all employees and their families are advised to contact your healthcare provider or state or local health department.

**Physical distancing – Workers must be at least six feet apart**

Stay at least six feet or two meters – about two arm’s lengths – from others whenever possible. This includes during breaks, meals, and when entering or exiting the workplace. Minimize face-to-face contact with others to the greatest extent practicable and conduct meetings virtually where possible. ECMN will consider placing markings on the floor in high traffic areas to help people to stay six feet apart.

Physical distancing of at least six feet must be maintained between the Bishop and Missioners when they are in the ECMN Offices. Additionally, the following protocols must be followed:

- Masks must be worn in common spaces, including when walking to and from various rooms in the office
- Office doors should remain closed if Missioners or the Bishop are not wearing masks while in their offices
- All meetings between Missioners and the Bishop should take place in open common spaces, and all those participating should wear masks.
- No outside visitors or guests will be allowed into the ECMN Offices.

**Wearing Masks**

All occupants are required to wear a disposable mask or cloth face covering when they are interacting in-person with others where physical distancing may be challenging, or away from their individual workspace, including the hallways, break rooms, elevators, and restrooms. People should keep their face coverings clean and wash them routinely depending on the frequency of use.

**Worker hygiene and source controls**

Basic infection prevention measures are being implemented at our workplaces at all times.

The Bishop and Missioners will:

- Wash their hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water frequently throughout the day, but especially at the beginning and end of their shift, prior to any mealtimes and after using the restroom.
- Sanitize their hands prior to or immediately upon entering the Offices.
- Eat in their own offices and minimize use of the shared kitchen space
- Immediately wash dishes used in the kitchen, dry and place them in the cupboard, or place dirty dishes in dishwasher (no dishes will be left out).

- Use hand-sanitizer dispensers (that use sanitizers of greater than 60% alcohol) placed at entrances and locations in the workplace so they can be used for hand hygiene in place of soap and water, as long as hands are not visibly soiled.

Missioners, the Bishop and tenants should use hand sanitizer or wash their hands regularly—every 30 minutes, when possible. Missioners, the Bishop and tenants should continue to take preventive actions to help stop the spread of germs by sneezing and coughing into a tissue or their elbow and avoid shaking hands or unnecessary physical contact with others.

Additionally, the following protocols will be followed:

- ECMN Offices will be cleaned daily by a contracted, professional cleaner, using COVID-19-specific cleaning agents and practices.
- All mail and deliveries will be received in a secure lockbox on the landing of the ECMN Offices.

ECMN complies with CDC guidelines on workplace sanitation. Employees and tenants should clean their personal workspace each day with disinfecting spray or wipes. This includes their telephone headset, computer, keyboard, mouse, and chair with disinfecting spray or wipes. Employees should remove all personal items and papers from their workspace at the end of each day to allow for deep cleaning as needed. Employees should also clean the surface of shared items, such as printers and microwaves, after each use.

### **Workplace building and ventilation protocol**

Ventilation systems are being properly used and maintained.

### **Protocols for Tenants of the ECMN Offices**

All tenants and organizations who rent and use space in the building will agree to follow the precautions and protocols listed above while using the ECMN office building.

## Appendix F

### Financial Resources

As faith communities plan to live in this current model of gathering and operating for the foreseeable future, please find below resources to support the financial planning and overall health of faith communities.

Representatives of your Trustees and ECMN Council, your ECMN Treasurer, Bishop, and Bishop-elect have been in regular communication as the COVID-19 situation has unfolded. We are looking to and caring for the overall financial health of ECMN, of the Pooled Investment Fund, and of the long-term sustainability of faith communities in light of the economic impact of this pandemic. We have already taken actions and will continue to take actions that ensure that ECMN is sustainable for the long term.

In light of all this, we write to you today to ask you to reach out if you have questions, concerns, or are need of support regarding the following specific items:

- Small Business Association (SBA) Payroll Protection Program Loan application
- SBA Payroll Protection Program (PPP) Loan relief process
- Recording PPP Loan and tracking related expenses\*
- ECMN's Secretary of State Filing
- ECMN's IRS Group Exemption Letter
- Mission Ministry Support Payments
- Financial Issues

*\*Note: Guidelines around calculation of PPP loan forgiveness continue to evolve, and will hopefully clarify as you work with your respective banks. In the interim, we encourage all faith communities to maintain detailed records, segregated from your other accounting records, regarding funds received and disbursements of anticipated eligible expenses. We will be providing updates as we receive further information.*

Please contact your Missioner for Finance, Jennifer Gamberg at [jennifer.g@episcopalmn.org](mailto:jennifer.g@episcopalmn.org) or 612-870-3308 with any and all questions.

We will walk with each faith community individually, as this situation will impact each one uniquely. Please know that we will do everything we can to support you and your faith communities.

Finance resources, guidance, and links can be found on the ECMN website at <https://episcopalmn.org/cares-act>.

## Appendix G

### Best Practices for Liturgies & Pastoral Care

In Phase 2, ECMN will release guidelines for clergy to utilize in planning for communion, baptisms, weddings, and funerals. Specific guidelines will include what can and cannot be done, the number of people allowed in spaces, and safety protocols.

During this phase, we will continue to learn together about the best practices for sustaining our life of common prayer. Look for further reflections, guidelines, and opportunities to discuss best practices in the weeks to come.

In the meantime, please review these policies and recommendations:

#### Pastoral Care for the Sick

- In-person, face-to-face pastoral care is discouraged following the protocols of the MN State Health of Department.
- Connect with the sick by telephone or video.
- Share prayers for use by the sick and their loved ones from the Book of Common Prayer (BCP) and Enriching Our Worship 2 (EOW2) by email or post.
- For those in hospitals and medical facilities, connect with the chaplains in the facility to ask about how they might provide direct spiritual care. Staff chaplains often carry oil for unction.

#### At the Time of Death

- The Prayers at the Time of Death, BCP p. 462-466 are suitable for lay people to use. Share these with family members, hospital chaplains, or even a nurse if you can reach them by phone.
- Clergy or pastoral caregivers may offer such prayers over the phone with the receiver at the ear of the patient if allowed. If that is not allowed by the hospital rules, you may pray these prayers on their behalf, with or without the family on the phone.

#### Burial

- A small graveside service may be held to inter the body. Such a service must be outdoors, with no more than 10 people, keeping 6 feet apart and wearing masks, and must be brief.
- Burial rites and memorial gatherings are to be held at an acceptable time after shelter-in-place requirements have ceased.
- Cremains may be kept in the church until burial rites are held IF you receive them while abiding by current infection-prevention guidelines.

- Note: In the scenario in which death rates increase, our funeral homes will be providing a crucial and highly stressful service. They may be at or near their capacity, literally, to help. Protocols may prohibit the immediate family from having a viewing, for example. This may be profoundly difficult for them to understand. If a parishioner dies, consult with the funeral director about what is and is not possible. Clergy will be a key line of communication with the family and a key provider of pastoral care about what can and cannot happen.

## Eucharist

There are specific considerations for serving Eucharist outdoors in [Appendix I](#).

In cases where indoor worship is permitted and you discern you are ready, the following principles and guidelines should be observed.

### All participants should

- Wear a mask at all times.
- Wash hands frequently and thoroughly (after touching your face, or touching items that others have touched).
  - Sanitizing hands is secondary to washing hands. Not all hand sanitizers are created equal. The most effective way to ensure sanitization is to use 72-90% alcohol in a spray bottle, and to sanitize no more than once between hand washing.
- Limit the amount of time individuals are in an enclosed space or in proximity to others.
- Ensure that there is no physical touching between persons.

### Eucharist best practices

- Minimize the amount of people touching objects:
  - Having one person set the table and handle the holy hardware before and after services creates the least amount of potential transmission.
  - Limit those involved with handling the elements and Eucharistic setup, and ensure everyone in the altar party has access to hand washing and sanitizing throughout the service, including ushers.
- Cover vessels at the altar.
- Distribute bread only.
- Use wafers instead of bread (allow for much less touching).
- Use tongs to put the wafers into communicants' hands (to reduce chances of transmission).
- Maintain over 6 feet of distance between households as individuals come forward to receive communion and return to their seats.



- Maintain a rigorous cleaning regimen for all frequently touched surfaces.

For those interested in a rubric that walks through the performance of the Eucharist step-by-step, I recommend to you the guidance developed by a priest in the Diocese of Nebraska. It is not a requirement that all clergy use this rubric; rather, it is provided as a resource ([it can be found on page 7 of their document, linked here](#)).

## Appendix H

### Sources

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “How Coronavirus Spreads,” March 4, 2020, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-covid-spreads.html>

Governor Walz Executive Orders: <https://www.leg.state.mn.us/lrl/execorders/eoresults?gov=all>  
(listed by most recent first)

Guidelines for Opening Up America Again: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/openingamerica/>

Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security’s Public Health Principles for a Phased Reopening During COVID-19: Guidance for Governors:  
[https://www.centerforhealthsecurity.org/our-work/pubs\\_archive/pubs-pdfs/2020/reopening-guidance-governors.pdf](https://www.centerforhealthsecurity.org/our-work/pubs_archive/pubs-pdfs/2020/reopening-guidance-governors.pdf)

\*\*Minnesota Department of Health COVID-19 data overview: <https://mn.gov/covid19/>

\*\*Minnesota Department of Health COVID-19 modeling overview:  
<https://mn.gov/covid19/data/modeling/index.jsp>

Minnesota Department of Health COVID-19 modeling 2.0, updated April 28, 2020, presentation:  
[https://mn.gov/covid19/assets/MNmodel\\_PPT\\_FINAL%204.10.20\\_revised%2020200501\\_tcm1148-430665.pdf](https://mn.gov/covid19/assets/MNmodel_PPT_FINAL%204.10.20_revised%2020200501_tcm1148-430665.pdf)

National Coronavirus Response: A Road Map to Reopening:  
<https://www.aei.org/research-products/report/national-coronavirus-response-a-road-map-to-reopening/>

Public Health Principles for a Phased Reopening During COVID-19: Guidance for Governors:  
[https://www.centerforhealthsecurity.org/our-work/pubs\\_archive/pubs-pdfs/2020/200417-reopening-guidance-governors.pdf](https://www.centerforhealthsecurity.org/our-work/pubs_archive/pubs-pdfs/2020/200417-reopening-guidance-governors.pdf)

\*\*Sites that regularly update Minnesota’s COVID-19 case data.

## Appendix I

### Outdoor Gatherings Guidelines

The guidelines for health and safety in an outdoor gathering remain the same as for an indoor gathering. Namely:

- Maintaining physical distancing--family units keep 6 feet apart
- All participants wearing masks at all times. The person giving the sermon can unmask while giving the sermon, if they are properly physically distanced from everyone.
- Still no handshakes, high fives, or hugs
- Provide ways for folks to sanitize hands if it is necessary to touch common surfaces
- Look through and create plans based on the questions and suggestions in [Appendix A](#) and [Appendix B](#) of this document.

Here are some planning considerations for outdoor gatherings:

- **Inclement weather:** sheltering inside the church building should not be an option, so have a plan to follow if/when there is inclement weather, particularly if weather turns inclement suddenly.
  - If you opt for something like a tent, make sure that it's open on all sides (because otherwise, it's basically like being inside).
- **Bathrooms:** think through where folks can use the restroom when needed, and follow cleaning and sanitizing protocols.
- **Seating:** if possible, encourage folks to bring their own seating (this cuts down on commonly touched surfaces, and therefore diminishes risk).
- **Continue online gatherings:** remember that there are folks who cannot and should not gather in person, so as you may move to gathering in-person, think through how you can include those who cannot gather.
- If there are any commonly used items or spaces, please create a plan for cleaning them based on the guidelines in [Appendix D](#).
- **Sound system support:** being outdoors makes it more difficult to hear, so think about utilizing sound amplification.
- **Singing:** if there is to be any singing during your gathering, it is recommended that only a soloist sings, and not a group.
- **Printing vs. Books:** we recommend that you use print materials or projection for any and all gatherings.
- **Eucharist:** bread only, distributed in individual, compostable cups
- **Streaming Online:** streaming an outdoor gathering can be difficult - particularly with the signal strength necessary to livestream, and with the difficulty of sound amplification. So have a plan for how to make service available to those who will not be able to attend.