

Report and Recommendations from the Task Force for Re-entering, Re-opening, and Re-imagining for the Diocese of New Jersey

Addendum September 30, 2020: Guidelines for Responding to an Exposure to COVID-19

If your church is contacted by someone who has been in your church's building(s) or on church grounds within the past 14 days and has been medically diagnosed with COVID-19 or has been notified of a positive test for COVID-19:

- Offer pastoral support and prayer. Ask specifically if the person wants their name shared, and follow the person's wishes.
- Encourage the person to contact their physician and local public health office to make sure they are aware of the COVID-19 case. Do not give any advice about quarantining or other public health measures.
- Notify Canon Phyllis Jones of the exposure (pjones@dioceseofnj.org). Include specifics about when the person was at the church, for how long, and if it is suspected others may have been exposed.
- Contact your local health department to report the exposure and ask for their recommendations about what actions need to be taken to protect the public health. This is important as the infected person may live in a different public health jurisdiction from where the church is located.
- The clergy or congregational response team should be notified of those recommendations and decide on a course of action (i.e. close the church, disinfect, continue with services, etc.).
- A pastoral notification of the congregation should be done with the utmost discretion.
 - No names should be used (unless the person gives specific permission to ask for prayers and support).
 - The facts of when the person was at the church (date, time, length of visit, etc.) should be shared.
 - Clearly state what actions have been taken (i.e. contacting the health department) and what the next steps are.
- If anyone is concerned about their exposure, they should call their personal physician or the local health department for further instructions. No one from the church should offer any medical or public health advice (such as whether someone should quarantine).
- Contact leaders of any outside groups that may be affected by the report.
- It is not the church's responsibility to perform contact tracing. That is for the local public health department. Only when asked by the health department for contact tracing information do we share with them the information we have gathered.

If a person suspects that they have been exposed to COVID-19 but have not had it confirmed by a test, encourage that person to get a test as soon as possible and to refrain from coming to the church for 14 days or until receiving a negative test result. If that person has been on or in church property, ask the person to notify the church immediately of their test results.

If the person exposed is a clergy person, that individual should not be present in the church office or at in-person services until the earlier of: a) two consecutive negative tests administered with an appropriate interval in between, in consultation with a medical professional, or b) 14 asymptomatic days from the date of the exposure.