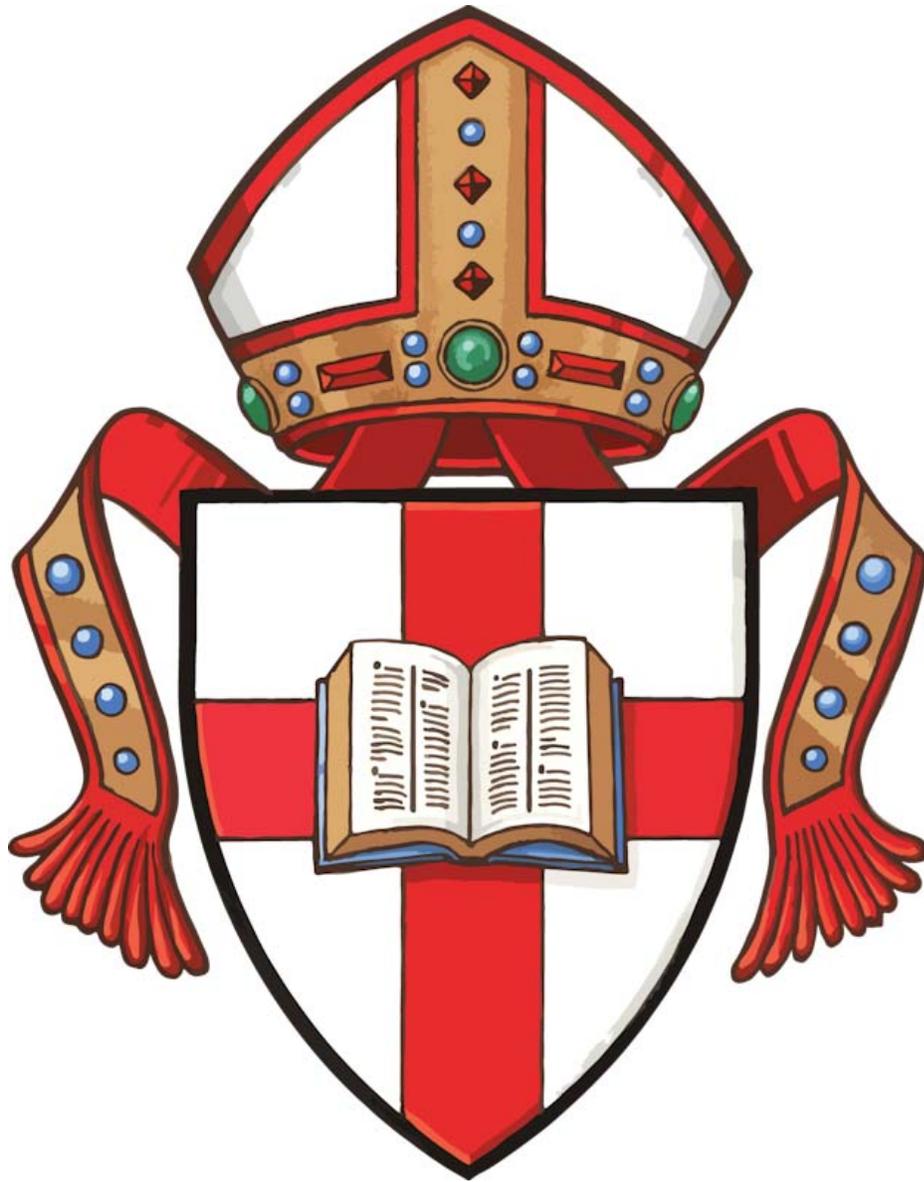


DIOCESE OF ONTARIO



Loving our Neighbours

Amber Phase

Version 2 – Nov 27, 2020

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1) Introduction

When our church buildings closed in March, we all longed for the day when we could safely return to worship and ministry in those buildings. Through the planning and guidelines of the Amber Stage (built on Federal, Provincial and local Health Unit regulations/guidance as well as consultation with Epidemiologists and other dioceses in the Province) and the hard work done in each church, most of our churches have safely re-opened. All of our guidelines and clarifications will typically reflect an abundance of caution in our approach, given how many of our parishioners are vulnerable in the face of this pandemic. As we know, the situation globally, nationally, provincially and locally continues to evolve and change. What this means is that the way forward will also evolve and may not be linear. It is possible that due to changes in the Pandemic locally or in the Province, we may have to step back at some point in the future (e.g. to the **RED Stage Guidelines**), as others in the Province have had to recently do.

Whether your church has already re-opened or if that still lies ahead, please read this document thoroughly as you work through what your parish needs to do to reduce risk and create a safe place. **Please note that your church does not have to move to a particular phase on the same timing as other churches do.** Every parish, its buildings, its people and its leadership are different. **Each church, therefore, using this document must discern the appropriate actions and timing for itself while meeting (at minimum) these. guidelines.** **Appendix F** contains links to other resources. If you have any questions about this document or the process for re-opening, please contact the Diocesan Office.

The guidelines reflect a strong Risk Management approach to the Health and Safety of all those in our churches. Our goals in developing the details of the Amber Stage include:

- Continuing to protect the most vulnerable among us by limiting contact and continuing and/or initiating practices to slow the spread of infectious disease.
- Offering hope and guidance to our communities in a time of uncertainty and changing news about what is permissible from a health perspective at any given time.
- Continuing to provide our people and communities with parish-based pastoral care and ministry now and in the months to come.
- Providing for the continuity of prayer and worship, whether people are gathered in person or online.

As a result of the caution in managing risks and the overwhelming commitment to protect those in our congregations and those we minister to, there are a number of instances where the Diocese of Ontario guidelines are more stringent (ie further reduce risk) than individual Health Unit guidelines. In all cases, we need to meet Health Unit requirements, while exceeding them in others. These guidelines have been updated to reflect clarifications and adjustments that have been made since they were first issued in August. They also reflect a review in the context of the upcoming seasons of Advent and Christmas.

The Diocese of Ontario entered the AMBER STAGE on SEPTEMBER 7th 2020. As of November 1st, most churches have applied for permission, been authorized by the Bishop and have re-opened.

Before deciding to be open for public worship, the Incumbent or Priest-in-Charge, Church Wardens and other Church Leadership discussed the questions listed in [Appendix A](#). Each church assigned a person or people to co-ordinate and implement the re-opening and ongoing plan. Churches should continue to use these guidelines as minimum requirements in developing their own plans. At any time when the Diocesan guidelines differ from provincial or municipal requirements, the more stringent guidelines are to be followed. The approved application to re-open (which represents the church Wardens and Incumbent's covenant with the diocese and their bishop remains on file in the Diocesan Office. Changes that occur after approval require re-submission of the changes for approval and update. An updated copy of the attached document ([AMBER Stage: Appendix C](#) or the separate Fillable PDF on the HUB) should be signed by the incumbent, the wardens and plan co-ordinator, then sent to the Diocesan Office: Pandemic@ontario.anglican.ca. After review, you will receive any comments and if all is complete be given permission to implement your re-opening. **You will need to submit your application at least 10 days prior to the date you want to reopen**

Each church has permission to remain open, provided they continue to follow the plan they had approved and continue therefore to meet the guidelines. If the wardens or clergy have questions or concerns about their intention or ability to continue to comply, then they should contact the diocesan office to determine if approval can remain in place.

2) COVID 19 Transmission and Prevention

SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, spreads from an infected person to others through respiratory droplets and aerosols created when an infected person coughs, sneezes, sings, shouts, or talks. The droplets vary in size from large droplets that fall to the ground rapidly (within seconds or minutes) near the infected person, to smaller droplets, sometimes called aerosols, which may linger in the air under some circumstances.

The relative infectiousness of droplets of different sizes is not clear. Infectious droplets or aerosols may come into direct contact with the mucous membranes of another person's nose, mouth or eyes, or they may be inhaled into their nose, mouth, airways and lungs. The virus may also spread when a person touches another person (i.e., a handshake) or a surface or an object that has the virus on it, and then touches their mouth, nose or eyes with unwashed hands.

We know that the virus is most frequently transmitted when people are in close contact with others who are infected with the virus (either with or without symptoms). We also know that most transmission occurs indoors.

Reports of outbreaks in settings with poor ventilation suggest that infectious aerosols were suspended in the air and that people inhaled the virus. These settings have included a choir practice, fitness classes, and restaurants. Transmission in these settings may have been facilitated by certain environmental conditions, such as re-circulated air.

Important notice for preventing COVID-19 outbreaks.

Avoid the "Three Cs"!

- 1. Closed spaces** with poor ventilation.
- 2. Crowded places** with many people nearby.
- 3. Close-contact settings** such as close-range conversations.



One of the key measures against COVID-19 is to prevent occurrence of clusters. Keep these "Three Cs" from overlapping in daily life.



The risk of occurrence of clusters is particularly high when the "Three Cs" overlap!

In addition to the "Three Cs," items used by multiple people should be cleaned with disinfectant.

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It is known that some settings are particularly risky for transmission of the virus. These include:

- closed spaces
- crowded places
- close-contact settings and close-range conversations
- settings where there is singing, shouting or heavy breathing, for example, during exercise (forceful exhalation)
- Prolonged exposure

Risk levels are increased where these factors overlap, e.g., closed, crowded spaces with close contact or singing.

Prevention has a number of key focus areas:

- Using Self Assessment and Screening to reduce exposure
- Hand sanitization to reduce contact transmission
- Cleaning and sanitizing to reduce contact transmission

- Physical Distancing to reduce the risk of droplets and aerosols
- Wearing Masks to reduce the risk of droplets and aerosols
- Contact Tracing to limit spread and warn those potentially exposed

Detail on each of these key focus areas:

A. Using Self Assessment and Screening to help prevent people with symptoms from entering the church.

- Everyone who enters the building should do a “Self Assessment” to ensure they do not have symptoms or are at known risk of having being exposed. The Self Assessment is in Appendix C
- No one should enter who:
 - i. Has any of the symptoms outlined in the COVID-19 symptoms document
 - ii. Has come in close contact with a person with symptoms of COVID-19 or who has come in close contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19, in the past 14 days.
 - iii. Has travelled outside of Canada in the past 14 days.
- Churches should display signs outlining COVID-19 symptoms and to assist people in Self Assessment.
- Greeters should ask each person as they enter if they have self assessed.
- Anyone experiencing symptoms or feel unwell should leave and seek medical attention

B. Hand sanitization.

- At the entrances and every room (as applicable), ensure that alcohol-based hand sanitizer is available with greater than 60% alcohol.
- All individuals should be encouraged to perform hand hygiene when entering, leaving and when before receiving communion

C. Ensuring Physical Distancing and Limiting Gathering Sizes

- It is recommended to train and empower the greeters to remind participants about these guidelines and Provincial health requirements
- Ensure physical distancing of at least 2 metres between all individuals not in the same household or social circle.
- Use clear markings on floors or furniture to promote physical distancing.
- We recommend developing a plan to reduce the number of doors that people must touch to enter your service, including the use of door stops or greeters.
- Together with capacity/seating planning (see the Guide on the HUB), identify places where people may gather, including the vestry/sacristy, bathrooms, back of the church, entrance ways, etc. A plan should be prepared to manage or

control those places with signs, barriers, monitors, etc. Bathrooms should be limited to one person at a time.

- It is also important to plan seating, access ways points of gathering or congestion and aisles/walkways.
- It is recommended to post signs and making announcements about non-contact greetings and reminders to refrain from shaking hands and hugging
- During this phase we must limit any in-person worship gatherings to the **lesser** of:
 - no more than 50 people,
 - OR the maximum number for your space while allowing 2 metres of separation between households
 - OR 30% of the normal legal seating capacity,
 - This maximum includes the celebrant(s), servers, musicians, sides people and wardens.
- Actual capacity will change based on the makeup of the congregation – individuals, couples, family units/bubbles. Be mindful that regardless of the makeup, the maximum of 30% of normal capacity or 50 people in total always apply.
- Individuals must sit at least two metres apart in all directions (360°). Members of the same family household or “Social Bubble” may sit together but be spaced from other individuals or Bubbles. A Planning Guide for Seating is available on the Diocesan HUB.
- Clear markers and spacing for seating to maintain physical distancing should be in place. Best practice is to rope off or otherwise mark pew/seats which are required for providing physical distancing rather than seating.
- All common surfaces must be cleaned before and after worship, including doorknobs, counter tops, pews, chairs, bathrooms, and electronics.
- If your building cannot accommodate your average Sunday attendance, consider multiple service times that might spread out the number of people gathered at any one time or meeting in another (perhaps larger) space such as your parish hall.
- Where the capacity of the church or limit on congregation size will present a challenge given the normal service attendance, it is recommended to consider inviting people to sign up to attend services in advance, capping sign-up places at a number lower than the maximum attendance, in order to allow space for visitors who may drop in (recommendation is 5-10%). It is also recommended to provide additional services as required. Please see the Guidelines for Worship Services section for more detail.
- In order to reduce risk, it is recommended to consider holding services outdoors (to the extent practicable). Outdoor services can take place with the number of attendees now determined by the number that may safely physically distance to a maximum of 100. All physical distancing requirements must still be honoured. For parishes that do not have adequate green space and wish to hold an outdoor service or other gathering, it may be possible to use parks. Check with your local authorities for regulations regarding booking, rental fees,

etc. Most municipalities will require a certificate of insurance (or charge you for the same) to cover liability. Our insurer can provide such certification. Another parish may also allow to you use their property.

- It is recommended to maintain some online worship and formation opportunities for those that will still be unable to join an in-person gathering, either due to risk or sense of safety. This also provides some easing where the capacity of the church is less than average service attendance.

D. Cleaning and sanitizing

- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces at least twice a day (when in use) or following every service whichever is more frequent.
- High touch Surfaces are most likely to become contaminated include, but are not limited to, pews, chairs, doorknobs, railings, elevator buttons, water fountain/cooler knobs, light switches, toilet and faucet handles, ceremonial objects, electronic devices, microphones, and tabletops
- Only use cleaning and disinfectant products that have a Drug Identification Number (DIN); it should be stated on product packaging. The diocese has provided access to acceptable products and provided a “starter kit” to each church
- Please see the current cleaning guidelines linked in [Appendix F](#).
- All prayer books, hymn books, and Bibles must be removed from pews during this time.
- To the extent practicable, we recommend considering removing all non-essential items from all public areas so that there are fewer surfaces to touch.
- Water Fountains should be shut off and marked as Not In Use
- It is recommended to keep the use of bathrooms to a minimum (as is practical). After each use, we recommend that the bathroom be re-sanitized. Bathrooms must be sanitized before and after each service (if used). One person per bathroom, regardless of the size of the room (with the exception of a parent and small child).
- It is recommended that churches continue to maintain appropriate stocks of tissue, soap, hand sanitizer, and disposable paper towels for drying hands.

E. Ventilation

- Maximize ventilation by ensuring that heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems are in good working order. Drawing as much fresh air as possible from outside will decrease the concentration of aerosols that may be suspended in the air, and reduce the chances of SARS-CoV-2 spread if those aerosols happen to contain the virus. If the weather permits, open a window. Reduce the noise level in public spaces, for example turn off the music, so people can speak as quietly as possible. The introduction of fresh air into

enclosed spaces is recommended to help improve air quality and reduce the likelihood of the spread of the coronavirus. With warmer weather, it is natural to want to use fans and turn on air-conditioning systems. Both are acceptable to use in conjunction with proper physical distancing practices and best practices.

- A great deal of concern has been raised regarding the use of fans and air conditioners. Guidance documents strongly recommend against blowing air across space occupied by people, but if absolutely necessary, then to direct the airflow upward or at a wall so as to cool the space without creating drafts. Furthermore, because fans and air conditioners recirculate room air without filtration, they should only be used in rooms that have adequate ventilation.
- Fans can be used to bring fresh air into a space. The most effective method is to place fans in windows and/or doors, aiming them outward. Windows and doors in other areas of the room should be open. This will allow the fans to exhaust stale, warm air from the room while bringing in fresh air at a controllable rate.
- Ceiling fans can improve the circulation of outside air and avoid pockets of stagnant air in occupied spaces. However, it is critical to maintain good outdoor ventilation when using ceiling fans (by opening doors or windows).
- For churches that have Air Conditioning, it should be used when available to help bring fresh air into indoor spaces and to reduce humidity levels. Fresh air dampers should be opened fully to allow the systems to pull in the maximum level of fresh air. If in doubt, contact your HVAC contractor.
- Washroom fans should be checked and cleaned to ensure they are operating at full capacity.
- Ensure that ventilation systems operate properly and increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible by opening windows and doors, if possible.

F. Wearing Masks

- A mask **MUST** be worn at all times by **EVERYONE** inside the building. There are no exceptions or exemptions to this requirement, other than children under the age of two. If someone is unable or unwilling to wear a mask, they may not be in the building, but should be encouraged to join worship online.
- A mask or face covering can be homemade or purchased, and **should**:
 - be made of at least 3 layers
 - 2 layers should be tightly woven material fabric, such as cotton or linen
 - the third (middle) layer should be a filter-type fabric, such as non-woven polypropylene fabric.
 - be large enough to completely and comfortably cover the nose, mouth and chin without gaping
 - allow for easy breathing

- fit securely to the head with ties or ear loops
- be comfortable and not require frequent adjustments
- be changed as soon as possible if damp or dirty
- maintain its shape after washing and drying
- Filters add an extra layer of protection against COVID-19 by trapping small infectious particles. Consider wearing a mask that includes a filter or filter material as one of its layers, such as:
 - non-woven polypropylene fabric, which can be found as:
 - a craft fabric
 - the non-woven fabric that's used to make some reusable shopping bags
 - a disposable filter inserted into a pocket on the mask
- A link to [Check out how to make your own face covering with a filter.](#)
- Reusable masks with a non-woven filter layer should be washed daily, and can be washed multiple times. Disposable filters should be changed daily or as directed by the manufacturer.
 - Churches should have a small supply of face masks (approx. 10% of expected service numbers) on hand for those who forget their face covering. Cloth masks are preferred to single use masks. The mask is given as a gift to the person. We discourage parishes from taking on the responsibility of laundering masks.
- Face shields are not a safe or suitable alternative to a mask. A shield may only be worn in conjunction with a mask.

G. Contact Tracing

- A log (including phone numbers) must be maintained for all who enter the building. This is in the event that they may have come in contact with someone with the disease and reporting is required for the Health Unit and follow-up notifications. The log should be managed by a greeter or an office staff-person or volunteer or follow some other no-touch method. It is recommended each person uses their own pen. If a common pen is required, it should be wiped down after each use. These records are to be securely and privately stored for not less than 30 days.
- A template for the Contact Tracing Log required may be found at the end of this document.
- For worship services, a sides-person or warden may find it simplest to use a parish list which allows for a quick check-off of those in attendance.
- In addition to services, records of meetings, faith formation and fellowship activities are also to be kept for 30 days in case of a request by the local public health unit as part of Contact Tracing for anyone potentially exposed to COVID-19.
- Those entering church buildings should be encouraged to make use of the COVID application available on both iPhone and Android devices.
- A parish should not respond if someone is merely suspected of being infected. However, if a person who has attended church informs the parish that they have tested positive for COVID, the parish must inform both the local public

health authority as well as the Executive Officer of the Diocese of Ontario. When doing so the parish must **not** provide any personal information (e.g., the name and/or contact information) of the parishioner. This includes keeping the information strictly confidential within the parish and elsewhere. If the public health authority requests personal contact information from the parish, the parish should provide it. A member of the Corporation should phone the public health authority (to confirm that they are a legitimate health unit) and provide the information contained on the contact list.

3) Re-opening a Building that has been unused for a time

Each church must provide for sanitization and reducing the risks of COVID-19 spread in the church buildings, with special attention to areas of the building that will now be open to in-person gatherings.

- Take steps to ensure that all water systems and fixtures are safe to use after a prolonged facility shutdown to minimize the risk of Legionnaires' disease and other diseases associated with water.
- Ensure any water heaters are set to at least 120° F.
- Flush the building's water system.
 - Flush hot and cold water through all points of use
 - Flushing may need to occur in segments (e.g., floors, individual rooms) due to facility size and water pressure. The purpose of building flushing is to replace all water inside building piping with fresh water.
 - Flush until the hot water reaches its maximum temperature.
- Maintain the water system (including regularly checking water quality as required)
- Ensure safety equipment including fire sprinkler systems, first aid kits, Automatic External Defibrillator (AED), etc. are all in good condition and working. In an emergency, CPR should be by "Hands Only" with no rescue breaths.

4) Preparing the Congregation

We recommend communicating with parishioners before they arrive about the preparations you have done for their re-entry and reiterating that, if they are sick or are of a vulnerable population, they should consider the risks and make a decision to attend or to stay home and

join online, if available, through your parish or another. Posters and other resources to support this can be found in the [Appendix F](#).

5) Guidelines for Worship Services

- In the Amber Stage, churches may offer in-person worship gatherings, within the maximum number determined under Requirements for Gathering Size. It is most important that all practice strict physical distancing as well as all the other precautions to inhibit the spread of infection.
- Churches may offer Holy Eucharist (subject to the requirements below) or some form of the Daily Office or worship focusing on readings, preaching, prayers and music.
- Timing of services: if on the same day, a minimum of one hour should be provided for between the end of one service and the beginning of the next to ensure adequate time for respiratory droplets to settle and for high touch points to be disinfected. Masks must be worn during cleaning and sanitization
- All services do not need to be held on a Sunday or Sunday morning.
- It is recommended to keep service length as short as is liturgically practical and less than an hour. The risk of infection increases with the length of exposure, particularly after an hour. In addition, the comfort of the congregation wearing masks should be considered.
- Churches should maintain some online worship and formation opportunities for those that will still be unable to join an in-person gathering, either due to risk or sense of safety. Vulnerable or concerned parishioners may still prefer to participate online only
- All prayer books, hymn books, bibles and other printed material must be removed from pews during this time. Personal prayer and hymn books should be left at home to avoid additional opportunities for transmission of the virus. Worship services may be followed using single-use bulletins (that are picked up rather than handed out), by sending a digital copy for people to access on their personal devices, or by using a screen and projector. Please make every provision for recycling single-use bulletins and limiting the number of bulletins printed for one household. Requirements of disinfecting make laminated sheets impractical.
- Physical distancing and masks must be maintained between each person in the Sanctuary and Chancel as well as to the front row members of the congregation.
- There is no physical touching during any portion of in-person worship. This includes physical sharing the Peace if used at this time (although exchanging the Greeting of Peace, without physical contact, is encouraged).
- Children under the age of 10 must remain with their families in church. Pencil and paper activities or small craft packets may be provided and are to be taken home by the family at the end of the service. Families may bring snacks and drinks for children, but they may not be shared with others and must be taken away by the family after the service. Children may remove their mask only to eat or drink.
- All common surfaces must be cleaned before and after worship, including doorknobs, Counter tops, pews, bathrooms (if used at all) and electronics.

- No liturgical processions are to take place unless the processions can accommodate physical distancing among those processing and from the members of the congregation.
- There is no passing of an offering plate through the pews. To limit contact, parishioners may offer financial gifts online or to a stationary plate as they come in or leave worship.
- Homilists must remain in a stationary location, wearing a mask, while preaching or have carefully marked out where they may safely walk while maintaining physical distance. The distance to the nearest congregant must be at least 10 feet.
- Collection received should continue to be counted with two people present (physically distanced). Masks, gloves, and handwashing after are recommended for the person counting, along with avoiding touch the face, eyes, etc.
- We recommend developing a plan for dismissing the congregation in an orderly way to ensure physical distancing as people exit. The congregation should simply disperse – again, maintaining physical distance from others while taking care to avoid entrances and exits becoming congestion points. To avoid crowding and bottle necks, there is no receiving line following a service.
- As they leave, the congregation should be encouraged to clean their hands and any other personal possessions they may have used in the church (eg mobile devices).
- It is preferable to have Microphones assigned to a single individual and not be passed between people or shared during a service. Microphones are to be sanitized between services if a different individual uses them. If they must be shared, care should be taken to minimize contact, and they must be sanitized after each user. Care should be taken in the sanitizing as microphones can be sensitive to fluid, but also may have droplets on them from the user. Lavalier and Headset microphones should not be shared.
- Where used, thuribles are not to be passed between thurifers and/or clergy.

Music and Singing

- Singing and some wind instruments have been identified among the riskier behaviours when it comes to spreading the virus.
- For services with more than 5 people (total) in the building
 - Congregational singing is not permitted
 - No choir singing is permitted
 - A single cantor or soloist may be used at any one time. Two singers singing antiphonally but not together is acceptable
 - Singers should be in the chancel and are required to have 15 feet of distance to another person. It is recommended they be placed behind a barrier (e.g. plexiglass). Any non-wind instrumentalists must also be masked and maintain normal social distancing.
 - No wind or brass instruments may be used in worship from inside the building. It is not possible to mitigate droplets or aerosols with a wind instrument by the use of a mask. A wind or brass instrumentalist may play from outside the building, from an entry doorway (facing parallel to the building)
 - String instruments and keyboards, pianos and organs are acceptable
 - A singer may use an accompanist or a recorded track

- All singers or instrumentalists should be appropriately screened in terms of their health.
- The officiant is required to refrain from singing while consecrating the elements.
- For recording session or services specifically for livestreaming
 - No more than five people may be present in the building at any one time
 - All people in the building must wear a mask at all times
 - Singers must maintain a minimum of 15 feet distance in all directions to another person.
 - The building must be cleaned and sanitized afterwards
- In person Choir practice are not permitted. Online rehearsals are permitted.

Eucharist

- During this phase, publicly sharing in the Holy Eucharist shall be in one kind only. During the **Amber stage**, parishes are permitted to celebrate Holy Eucharist, with only the celebrant receiving the Sacrament in both kinds. Everyone else present will be invited to receive the bread only, via individual wafers.
- All sanitization of the altar surface where the elements are placed, vessels and peoples' hands must occur before and after the Eucharist.
- Setting the altar is to be done by the celebrant in order to reduce the number of persons touching the vessels. As only the presiding celebrant will receive the wine, only a very small amount needs to be poured into the chalice.
- After the ritual words of the Peace, worshippers are invited to share the peace through smiles, peace signs, bowing, etc. from their pew. There is no general movement throughout the nave.
- Immediately prior to the beginning of the Eucharistic Prayer and immediately prior to the distribution of communion the celebrant is required to wash and/or sanitize their hands.

The celebrant should consecrate a priest's host for the celebrant to consume and consecrate individual wafers for those receiving communion. The wafers (regular and gluten-free) for the people are to be covered and placed to the side of the altar during the consecration.

- During the Eucharistic prayer, the bread should be covered by a pall or ciborium cover throughout the prayer. The wine may also be covered with a pall but as the presider is the only one consuming the wine, this is less essential. Only the presider may stand at the altar. All other persons in the chancel must maintain physical distancing.
- After the breaking of the bread, the celebrant should consume the priest's host and the consecrated wine. They should then sanitize their hands.
- One or more standing stations may be used. Avoid use of the communion rail. A route is to be designed to and from the station that will cause minimal need to pass others in the aisle. Mark floors and remind congregants during announcements and in the bulletin to stand physically distanced when waiting in line for communion. In smaller churches, having one person/family bubble approach at a time, with the next not moving until the first is back in the seat. It may also be more practical for the priest to take communion to member in their pews.

- Alcohol-based hand sanitizer is to be used by communicants immediately before the reception of Eucharist, allowing 20 seconds for it to have effect.
- The celebrant must then (with mask on), sanitize their hands again and distribute the bread to those receiving; making sure not to touch the hands of those receiving the bread. Where the number of communicants requires additional ministrants for the distribution, each must wash or sanitize just before handling the bread.
- During this unique time, the means of delivering the bread of the Eucharist to the assembled congregation should allow for flexibility with safety being of primary concern. It is imperative in that regard that the bread be handled in a manner that minimizes the number of persons handling it. Clergy should consult with the Bishop as required.
- The ministrant carefully places the wafer on the outstretched hands of the communicant being careful not to make contact. If accidental contact is made, the officiant should sanitize their hands before proceeding.
- For small congregations, wafers may be placed on the altar or altar rail on individual patens or small plates. One communicant at a time should approach to take a wafer.
- The communicant receives the bread, moves to a designated location (at least 6-8 feet from the station), removes their mask, consumes the host, replaces their mask, and returns to their pew.
- After all have received bread, the celebrant must sanitize their hands again.
- If ablutions are usually performed by someone other than the presiding celebrant, under no circumstances should anyone else drink from the chalice. This may mean leaving it for the presider after the service or pouring any wine in the chalice and the first rinse of water down a piscina or directly on to the ground.

Funerals

- Funerals in church buildings may take place following the guidelines for services of worship and guidelines from the Bereavement Authority of Ontario
- The checklist for Funerals may be found in [APPENDIX G](#)
- Funerals in funeral homes are permitted. It is the responsibility of the funeral director to see that all regulations of the Bereavement Authority of Ontario are followed.

Weddings

- Weddings in church buildings may take place following the guidelines for services of worship.
- The checklist for Weddings may be found in [APPENDIX H](#)
- Outdoor Weddings may now occur with the number of attendees to be determined by the number that may safely physically distance in the area, up to a maximum of 100. As always, prior approval from the Bishop's Office must be sought for outdoor weddings in accordance with the current diocesan policy on Marriage Outside of the Church. Physical distancing must be maintained

Baptisms

- Baptisms are permitted as part of a public worship service of the church and within the guidelines for worship services.
- If the family and friends of the candidate(s) are of such number that there would be little room for other parishioners to attend, permission may be sought from the Bishop or Territorial Archdeacon to hold a baptismal service at a time other than the regularly scheduled services of the parish. If permission is granted, those at the service must include two (2) persons from the congregation who are not related to the baptismal candidate and represent by their presence the larger Body of Christ.
- The font is sanitized and filled with clean water. If more than one person is to be baptized, a separate bowl of water should be used for each candidate. The font should be covered and remain in the font until the Thanksgiving over the Water.
- The person to be baptized, if an infant, remains in the arms of their family of one household. A family member will pour the water upon the infant.
- The baptized is anointed with oil on a clean new cotton ball or Q-tip (paper). If more than one candidate, a new cotton ball is used for each. The cotton ball or Q-tips are burned after the baptism. The presider must sanitize their hands before and after anointing.
- A member of the baptismal party lights the baptismal candle from the paschal candle as the words of presentation are said.

6) Guidelines for Ministries

Pastoral Care

- Physical distancing is required at all in-person pastoral visits. Face coverings are required for the pastoral visitor and if possible, for the person receiving pastoral care. Hands should be sanitized/washed immediately before and after the visit.
- Pastoral visitors should make every effort to safeguard others by limiting multiple visits on the same day. If necessary, care should be taken in washing/sanitizing and using fresh masks.
- In-person pastoral visits should not be undertaken to people who are quarantined, self-isolating or to those who are currently experiencing any of the symptoms of COVID-19.
- Clerics or pastoral visitors are to be healthy and without an underlying medical condition that makes them vulnerable. Clerics and pastoral visitors must self-screen for symptoms of COVID-19 or other illnesses before visiting. Do not visit if there is any sign of illness. See [APPENDIX D](#) for self-screening questions.
- Do not shake hands or hug at any time.
- If Anointing the Sick, the anointer is to wash hands before and after the anointing. The same provisions as Baptismal anointing should be maintained (see above)
- If Communion is part of the pastoral visit, it is to be from Reserved Sacrament and to be bread only. Hands are to be sanitized before and after Communion. Reserve sacrament should be placed in individual sealed containers/bags after consecration to protect them.
- Share pastoral care contact information widely so that those in need of care know how to connect with clergy or lay pastoral staff without visiting the church.

Formation, Fellowship and Stewardship

- Formation activities such as Bible or book studies, prayer groups, etc. should continue on-line where possible. Where they occur in person, they must in groups of 50 or under that observe physical distancing. At this time, it is required that these meetings to be held in church buildings and not in peoples' homes.
- Fellowship may continue through virtual coffee hours, using phone trees and other methods to ensure that each member of the parish is regularly contacted by others. Indoor fellowship (including coffee hours) is not permitted in the **Amber Stage**.
- Outdoor Fellowship activities may occur with proper distancing and hygiene but may not include the serving or sharing of food or drink.
- Continual stewardship activities are recommended to encourage awareness of God's blessings, foster a culture of gratitude and generosity, promote awareness of gifts and increase attentiveness to needs both within and beyond the congregation.
- In order to minimize contact risk for those who will be counting collection, there should be encouragement for parishioners who are not already on Pre-Authorized Giving plans to sign up or for them to consider making e-transfers to the church.
- Fund-raising efforts in groups of 50 or under may continue if sanitization and physical distancing and all other group protocols are followed.
- Food or beverages may not be served
- Apart from our duty to protect children themselves, there is an ongoing risk that they may carry the virus back home and transmit it to other family members. It is preferred for programming for children and youth to remain on-line where possible. If a church wishes to resume activities for children and youth, the church must receive approval from the diocese, after providing details of their plan to ensure a safe environment. Specific permission must be obtained from the parents for the activity. Masks must be worn by all and physical distancing must be maintained. No activities which require or likely create contact are permitted at this time.
 - Arrange for children's and youth ministry areas to be cleaned by professionals and/or volunteers after each gathering.
 - Communicate that anyone who is ill, experiencing symptoms or who has been exposed to COVID-19 must stay home. Everyone must be symptom-free before entering the building.
 - Communicate that anyone who has travelled internationally must stay home and self isolate for 14 days before entering the building.
 - Frequently touched surfaces must be cleaned twice a day if used throughout.
 - Designate separate entrances if possible, with appropriate signage, including Symptoms, the need for masks and sanitizing hands.
 - Review and modify if needed the emergency safety protocol (fire evacuation, medical emergency, etc.).
 - Place hand sanitizer containing at least 70% isopropyl or 60% ethanol at the entrance(s) and elsewhere throughout the space.
 - Provide masks) in a variety of sizes, including child-size, and require their use.
 - Rearrange furniture and reduce seating capacities to ensure small group sizes and physical distancing; clearly mark seating areas on the floor with mats or with tape/stickers on carpets to illustrate distancing.
 - Close rooms that will not be in use and post signs not to use

- Close kitchens and lunchrooms. No food or beverages are to be served or shared
- Only one child/youth (or one child with one attending adult) is to use the washroom at a time.
- Use signage as well as floor indicators to show physical distance for those waiting for the washroom.
- Ensure adequate numbers of volunteers/staff.
- There must be a dedicated volunteer to monitor admission: for attendance, screening and contact tracing purposes. There is never to be fewer than two adults per group of children of any size.
- Ensure sufficient staff and volunteers to safely monitor children for social distancing, and mask and hygiene compliance during program
- Communicate to staff and volunteers to keep physical distance at all times, practice good hand hygiene and cough hygiene, and that they must wear a mask.
- Remind staff and volunteers that they must clean and sanitize hands upon arrival and frequently throughout their time doing children and youth ministry
- A trained volunteer should have the sole task of controlling entry, asking screening questions and taking attendance with the collection of contact tracing information. For reasons of privacy, contact logs must be securely stored for a period of thirty (30) days. A sample Children and Youth Contact Log can be found at the end of this document.
- Ensure good communications with parents on expectations and requirements
- Children aged four and older (ie., those who are familiar with school Covid-protocols, and can self-toilet) may attend without adult accompaniment.
- Children under the age of four must be accompanied by an adult in their 'bubble'.
- Children's ministry volunteers and staff are not permitted to touch or hug children, or to help them with their hygiene.
- Children are to be offered hand sanitizer at regular intervals and whenever they are seen to be touching their face or mask
 - For Youth Programs, regardless of the activity, youth must be masked and socially distanced all times.
 - At Youth programs and events, food and drinks are not to be served or shared.
 - Youth are encouraged to bring their own water bottles
- Hand sanitizer should be used frequently by Youth and Volunteers/Staff

Meal programs and Food Banks

- Food-assistance programs are encouraged to continue with adequate hygienic and physical distancing controls in place. All local public health regulations for food preparation and the above guidelines for the church must be followed at all times for the safety of all.
- Food may not be consumed in the building
- Distribution of meals may occur from an outside doorway

7) Fund Raising

Events such as sales (baking, crafts, yard sales, etc) are a source of income for most churches. This includes Christmas Bazaars and Fairs.

Indoor events such as Bazaars bring a number of risks. Confined Spaces, Closed Spaces and Close Contact represent higher risk environments. Many church halls are smaller in size. Events that are open to the general public also increase risk, particularly where many people may arrive and exit over the course of the event. Events where people move around rather than being seated in single assigned place also increases risk. It is clear that such events have a much higher risk level associated with them than worship. As with everything else during this time, we are operating on the principle of “an abundance of caution”. The health and safety of all remains top priority.

Indoor sales (including bazaars) are not permitted during the Amber Stage. Craft and Bake Sales can happen on line. Sales can be held outside (with masks and distancing). Care must be taken to manage flow of people to enable distancing. Some churches have sold goods in the outside doorway. Others have done Curbside Pickup. Any baked goods must be carefully prepared, packaged, displayed and handled with proper sanitation and care. All goods sold must also be displayed and handled with sanitation and care.

Non-Wind Instrumentalists and single singers may provide music at an outdoor event, with additional physical distancing. Masks must be worn. Care must be taken to avoid people gathering and losing distancing.

8) Office and Staff

During this stage, staff members may be permitted to work from home, if they wish, depending on circumstance and job requirements. While some staff may wish to work from Parish premises, especially the immunocompromised, parents of children, and those older than 60 should be discouraged from doing so. We advise that the mode of transportation a parish employee or volunteer uses to travel to work be taken into consideration in terms of their working in the office or from home.

- Regular office operations are permitted. We advise considering how you might maintain flexibility for staff members that are immunocompromised, have children unable to attend school or access childcare, or are highly vulnerable

- Any staff members or volunteers working from church-owned buildings must continue to follow physical distancing and sanitary guidelines, including:
 - Maintaining two metres of separation between individuals
 - Regular handwashing and sanitizer use
 - Regular disinfection of common surfaces including doorknobs, countertops, and office electronics.
 - Masks or cloth face coverings must be worn in church offices by all staff and visitors. Signs should be posted to advise.
 - Staff and volunteers should avoid sharing office space or using another employee's workspace and tools (e.g. computer, pens, etc.)
 - Not entering church buildings if they feel sick, have a temperature, or have other signs of COVID-19
- In-office meetings should still be kept to a minimum. Where in person meetings occur, there must be physical distancing and disinfecting before and after. It is still preferable (lower risk) to hold meetings online or by telephone.
- Where possible, interior doors should remain open to eliminate the need for using door handles and to maximize ventilation.
- Visitors should be directed by signs/arrows. It is recommended that staff have a protective barrier (e.g. Plexiglass) where possible to protect during interactions.
- Desktop phones should be used by a single person and the receiver and cradle should be cleaned at the beginning and end of each day with a disinfectant wipe or cleaning solution.
- Gathering spaces (kitchens, break room, etc.) should be closed or limited to one person at a time.
- No food or drink should be open or consumed in common areas.

Offices and Meeting Spaces

- Common spaces must be cleaned on a regular basis, including before and after gatherings.
- In the **Amber Stage** in-person meetings are permitted. We advise considering how you might enable your high-risk members to join your meetings online
- Parish Advisory Council or other teams/ministry committees can continue to be held online or can be held in person if the building permits for physical distancing. Normal protocols for access, masks, etc. apply

9) Building Use by User Groups and Rentals

During this time the use of church buildings by all user groups, including 12-step groups and all rentals is permissible if the numbers of people at one time are 50 or under. We recommend that parishes only open to those groups that they can safely accommodate at this phase given physical distancing, handwashing, and sanitization protocols. All user groups should be asked to sign a declaration of their compliance with safe procedures. As sample can be found in [Appendix E](#). One-time rentals are not recommended during the [Amber Stage](#).

Licensed Child-care providers are permitted to resume or continue their operations within the guidelines and regulations of the Province.

10) Liability

We are charting new waters with a new disease that has had an unprecedented effect in our society. We will need to deal with the pandemic without the benefit of how the law has responded in the past (legal precedents). As always, it is important to understand what liability is and how it is determined. Liability (something a church is legally responsible for) becomes a case or lawsuit when someone alleges that your organization did something they should not have or did not take adequate steps to prevent a known risk. The term we face most frequently is negligence.

It is the responsibility of the church to communicate, implement, and enforce the guidelines set forth by the experts to ensure the safety of their employees, volunteers, congregants and visitors. It is equally important they follow the specific safety protocols that are put in place by government, health experts and the diocese. If a church does not follow the guidelines, they risk liability implications and potential legal consequences. This negligence could include the organization and the leadership (Lay and Clerical). While we are in the early days of court judgements in the area of COVID-19 related claims, the insurance we have in place should cover liability where the appropriate measures have been taken.

There may be increased liability through third parties, such as renters. Third party agreements should be updated to include the COVID-19 safety measures being adopted by the church. We encourage churches to work to ensure vendors/users/tenants comply with the church's new safety policies and to make sure there is proper indemnification language, as well as expectations of the church and the tenants/users.

Appendix A

Frequently Asked Questions Loving our Neighbours AMBER STAGE

1. What are we saying regarding those who are in the vulnerable category due to age or medical conditions?

Those in the 65 and older category or with underlying medical issues should be encouraged to remain at home. If a person in that vulnerable category wishes to attend services, they cannot be prohibited. Our role is simply to caution them of their potential risks and encourage them to remain home and continue to take advantage of online services and activities. There is, however, no exemption to the requirement that all must wear masks when inside the building.

2. What if our church doesn't feel comfortable reopening even when permission is given?

No church will be forced to reopen if the congregation and leadership feels uncomfortable doing so. Online worship, studies, small groups, etc. should be maintained as an offering even after it chooses to reopen. Similarly, if conditions change, an individual church can make the decision to take a step back.

3. Hospitality to those outside our usual congregation. Several churches have had people arriving for worship who are not part of their normal congregation or may come from outside the local community, including areas with higher case counts of COVID-10. Normally, churches are delighted to welcome newcomers and extend hospitality. However, concerns about the risks of exposure to the virus raised questions from some about how to approach welcoming. The objective of the protocols and measures that are in place is to protect when someone who is infected may be present. These include:
 - o Self Assessment for symptoms or risks before entering
 - o Masks being worn properly by all people at all times
 - o Hand Sanitizing
 - o Maintaining Physical Distancing
 - o Reducing higher risk activities (e.g. singing, physical contact at the Peace, coffee hours, etc)
 - o Keeping services shorter (1 hour or less) to limit any exposure that does occur.

While fears remain that someone coming from an area with higher rates of COVID-19 Infection might be a risk to those gathering for worship or to take part in ministry, we have an obligation to provide hospitality to all. The protocols and measures are in place to reduce the risks of infection and protect all in the building.

4. What should we do if we are at our approved capacity and others arrive for worship?

Each church determines a capacity based on the guidelines. The capacity is the LESSER of:

- 30% of normal capacity (Fire Marshall determined)
- The maximum number of people that can be seated based on the Physical Distancing Guidelines (see the Planning Guide)
- A maximum of 50.
- Once the determined and approved maximum capacity is reached, if others arrive to attend a service, they should gracefully be asked to either return for the next service (if multiple services are being offered), or tune into the online worship experience. If there are other rooms that have been properly prepared (using the guidelines), they could be ushered to those spaces (utilizing speakers or internet if available). While it will be disappointing for the individuals, the greeters, wardens, clergy, and congregation to have to turn people away, it is a matter of safety and in some cases Health Unit regulations.
- For those that have larger numbers in worship, it is recommended to take advance registrations or “booking” for those wishing to attend. Each local church will need to address this issue as it relates to their particular context and need.

5. Should restrooms be open?

The recommendation is to attempt to limit use of restrooms. Shorter services and no social time or beverages should assist with this. If necessary, restrooms can be used, but only with strict adherence to the guidelines and need for disinfecting/cleanings after each use

6. Can family members sit together?

Yes. Those in the same “social bubble” may be seated together, with physical distancing to any other persons or bubbles. The number of total people cannot exceed the capacity determined.

7. What about the role of greeters and ushers?

These persons have played a key role in the life of our churches for years. They are most often the first wave of contact that a person has when they enter worship. Ushers and greeters should be well trained to assume a new function as situations occur and evolve. They are the ones who should ask people on arrival if they have Self-Assessed for COVID 19, instruct them about the new entry/exit procedures, ensure that all persons have a mask and are wearing it, make sure that everyone understands the new protocols and then guide people to open seating. It would be helpful if a church would provide a simple, one-page document that explains the protocols and could be provided by an usher and/or greeter at the time of entry. Of course, Greeters/Ushers also need to demonstrate appropriate physical distancing, wear a mask and wash/sanitize their hands.

8. What if someone comes isn't feeling well or raises concerns from the Self Assessment?
Anyone who is exhibiting symptoms should be asked to not enter and to seek further testing in order to ensure their safety and the safety of others.

9. Can cleaning before and after services be done by volunteers or should they all be professionals?

Before the official reopening takes place, the recommendation was to consider bringing in a professional service to clean the floors, pews, seats, etc. Once re-opened, the church should secure the services of dedicated laity from the church to be a part of a "cleaning team." To seek professional services to clean following each service would be, in all likelihood, too expensive. To secure committed and well-trained laity to assume this responsibility will take great amounts of commitment and intentionality, but will be one of the most important parts of maintaining a safe space for all. Should a specific concern be raised about a COVID exposure with someone who has been in attendance, a professional cleaning may again be the best response.

Offering safe hospitality, offering a space that has been thoroughly cleaned and sanitized (based on the guidelines) will go far in establishing trust and a sense of peace for all who attend.

10. Can we re-open offices, rentals, etc?

The Amber Guidelines provide detail for each of the major components of a church's life in the building. Each church receives approval for these activities/services based on what they have planned for and listed in their Application to Re-Open. Changes after that require re-submission for approval

Once again, strict adherence to the regular cleaning of each space before and after use as well as social distancing and wearing of masks must be followed. Regular Safe Church/Screening in Faith and other safety precautions should continue to be observed as well.

11. Should clergy and other worship or pastoral care leaders be tested for the virus and/or antibodies? Is this required?

Anyone who is exhibiting symptoms should be encouraged to not participate and seek further testing in order to ensure their safety and the safety of others.

12. Would you encourage measuring the temperature for all who come once our church reopens?

This is a practice that has been seen in a variety of settings throughout the course of this pandemic. While it is a good practice and would be considered a safeguard measure, it is not listed as a requirement. The Self Screening tool should be adequate, based on Health Unit guidance.

13. What if someone arrives for worship and doesn't wish to cooperate with the need for wearing a mask or social distancing?

In all matters related to COVID precautions and safeguards, there needs to be intentional communications AND extreme kindness employed. Everyone who enters our church buildings carries the responsibility for their own health and safety, but also for everyone who attends. If someone does not wish to be cooperative, those who encounter the person (front door greeter, usher, lay leader, or pastor) should exhibit a non-anxious spirit of grace but be undeterred in their response:

- Politely ask the person to wear one of the masks being provided.
- If they refuse, politely ask them to go outside so that they might listen to the service from a remote location (if possible) or return home and watch the service via the internet.
- If they refuse, explain to them that if they persist the entire worship service will need to be ended so as to not put anyone in potential risk of infection.
- If they refuse, the cleric should explain the situation to the gathered church, offer a benediction, and dismiss everyone.
- Confirm to the person that this is Diocesan Policy, supported by medical experts and the Public Health Unit.

We all hope and pray that this type of situation will not arise but to compromise our position is to compromise the health and safety of someone who has come for worship.

14. How are we to do deal with visitors who come when they see the doors open?
How do we deal in particular with the homeless and the hungry?

Of course, our doors are always open to visitors. How we approach them is exactly in the same way we approach our regular attenders. The same guidelines apply and they will need to be informed of the limitations placed on everyone who gathers for worship.

We have not required our facilities to be closed to the homeless and hungry throughout the pandemic as they have been identified as “essential services” from the beginning.

We have multiple churches that have established very clear social distancing guidelines for the homeless and creative techniques such as “grab and go” for feeding ministries. These essential ministries to poor and homeless are encouraged but they must be done with compliance to the guidelines provided.

15. Must the Presider/Celebrant, Preacher, Readers, Singers, Musicians wear masks?

Masks are required to be worn by all persons in the building . While this can affect the ability to project the voice and can be awkward or uncomfortable, this remains the best practice for safety of all, sets the proper example for all and complies with Health Unit guidance/requirements for indoors. Microphones and Sound Systems can enhance the ability to be heard, even when wearing a mask.

16. Are Plexiglass Face Shields an alternative to Masks?

Face Shields are useful as a supplement to Masks. However, there is no medical evidence that Shields by themselves are effective in limiting the wearer as a source or in protecting the wearer from infection. Masks must be worn regardless if a Face Shield is used or not.

17. What if we only have one handicap accessible entrance? How will we deal with entry and exit issues?

This will be a matter that will need to be discussed by your Planning and Reopening Team. Great care will need to be exercised in creating a plan and procedure that allows for proper physical distancing in entry and exit for those who need to utilize the handicap accessible entrance.

18. What about groups that use our facility and have anonymity concerns?

The leaders of such groups should sign a compliance sheet (similar to template provided in the Guidelines) which confirms that they understand and will fully follow the restrictions and guidelines.

19. What if our church has a "Thrift Store" or "Feeding Ministries" or "Foot Care Clinics?"

Once approval has been granted, a thrift store must comply with all of the guidelines, especially making sure that less than capacity are in the store at any time, utilizing social distancing, wearing of masks, and frequent hand washing. Any requirements placed on retail establishments by the local Health Unit which may exceed Diocese Guidelines must be complied with in full.

One of the challenges with a Thrift Store is the frequent touching of items by multiple persons making sanitation a very real and ongoing concern. This can create virus spreading and liability issues and often makes contact tracing somewhat problematic. Care and attention must be exercised.

Ventilation is also important to consider, as staff/volunteers will spend extended time in a closed space. Allowing for fresh air to enter is key.

Those who are overseeing Feeding Ministries should re-think their method of ministry and distribution to take into consideration some of the similar problems

stated above. The use of “grab and go” bags of canned goods, the distribution of gift cards, and food vouchers should be seriously considered.

Foot Care clinics must provide for the same building use requirements. The provider must also ensure their compliance with hygiene, disinfecting, contact, etc as outlined by the Province/Health Unit.

20. What about Music activities?

The guidelines are clear on singing. Under Amber Stage guidelines, only one person may sing at any time. This still allows for multiple singers antiphonally, but no more than one singer at any time. Singers must be masked and at increased physical distancing.

Churches that wish to record services for online use with singers must use the RED STAGE guidelines. A maximum of 5 people in the building (including the presider/celebrant and all musicians) are permitted at any one time. All persons, including singers must be masked at all times. Recording sessions without singers can use the Amber Guidelines.

Individual Instrumental lessons can only occur in well ventilated spaces with social distancing. Singing lessons would require the same protocols as worship singing (one person, masked, physically distant). Lessons should not take place in closed spaces, such as a choir room, but rather in a large well-ventilated space like the church.

In-person Choir practices are not permitted at this time.

Wind Instruments are not permitted to be used, as masking is not possible.

21. Is there any insight or guidance on acquiring necessary supplies that will be needed (PPE, hand sanitizer, wipes, etc.)?

The Diocese has provided guidance on cleaning and disinfecting supplies. Starter Kits were made available at no cost. Churches have access to the supplier and negotiated pricing for cleaning and sanitizing products that were provided in the Starter Kits.

22. Will there be additional financial assistance provided if needed?

We are still offering technological grants to our churches who need assistance with internet ministries. This program will remain in place till the end of 2020.

We also provided a Cleaning and Disinfecting “Starter Kit” to churches free of charge. These were available till the end of October.

Insurance premiums have been provided with an “interest free period” since March.

The diocese will continue to collect revenue data from churches and apply for the Canadian Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) for each period for which we qualify. Any funds received are credited to churches Payroll Invoices in the following month.

Synod Council has approved a Pandemic Financial Support concept. Churches who meet the criteria for revenue loss will be able to apply once the program details are finalized.

23. *Are there any implications for Church Insurance?*

While most general liability policies do not contain specific exclusions for legal liability arising from the transmission of infectious diseases, they do contain an exclusion for criminal and intentional acts. This can potentially result in denial of a liability claim “if” injury, sickness or death results from an organization or corporation – specifically its directors, officers or senior management – knowingly or intentionally breaking the law or not being in compliance with regulations or directives.

The most important advice we can give to prevent avoidable lawsuits and potential issues with insurance is to take all steps to ensure compliance with the guidelines provided by the diocese and local health units.

24. *Should we/can we launder Masks?*

Best practice is for churches NOT to undertake either managing or laundering masks. Individuals can be given masks and then take them home to be laundered and re-used themselves. Disposable masks can also be provided (safely disposed of afterwards).

25. *If we only use our building once a week, do we still need to clean and disinfect?*

There is clear evidence that the virus survives for different periods of time on different surfaces. This can vary from a few hours to 4-5 days, depending on the surface and the strain of Coronavirus. The best (and required) practice is that the building is cleaned and sanitized after each use. This protects anyone who may enter the building at other times, is the safest approach and avoids another potential liability situation.

26. *Why the recommend hour between services/events in the church?*

The recommend one hour is to allow sufficient time for cleaning/disinfecting and for several exchanges of the air in the building. Cleaning and disinfecting must always be thorough (which requires time), but this is even more essentially immediately after surfaces having been potentially exposed to the virus. It also allows time for droplets in the air to settle and fresh air to be circulated through the building. This can be adjusted somewhat for local situations and circumstances.

27. *How long can services or meetings last?*

The medical evidence clearly shows that the risk of infection is highest where three factors come together – Closed spaces (with poor ventilation), Crowded spaces with people near each other and Close Contact. It also is clear that the

risk of infection increases with the length of time exposed to the virus. General guidance is to keep potential exposure under one hour if at all possible.

28. How long must we maintain the contact logs?

In the Diocese of Ontario, with the guidance of Health Units, Contact Trace Logs must be securely maintained for 30 days. Some other dioceses are requiring Logs be retained for 3 years, but this is not the case in the Diocese of Ontario.

29. Are we allowed to collect food for the food bank and for Christmas gifts distributed by local ministries?

These ministries are needed now more than ever, and we encourage you to continue to support them. However, it would be wise to double check with non-food bank organizations to make sure they're accepting donations and if they have any restrictions or guidelines.

Appendix B

Questions for the Incumbent/Priest-in-Charge and Church Wardens

We offer this list of questions for each Parish's Clerical and Lay Leadership to discuss. We recommend you work through these questions before submitting your questionnaire seeking approval to reopen for in-person gathering. These questions are for your discussion, not for submission to the Diocese.

- How will you maintain connection with those who cannot gather in-person, even when restrictions are lifted?
- How many people can your worship space hold given the guidelines. Are more services required?
- How will you discourage congregating after worship services?
- How will you continue to be invitational and open to people that are not yet part of your community?
- How will you ensure sanitation and disinfection for all your communal spaces? When needed, how will you sanitize bathrooms after every use?
- How might your building use agreements need to be updated to reflect the new realities revealed by the pandemic?
- How will you maintain necessary stewardship and fund-raising activities to maintain operations while the congregation, or part of it, is dispersed?
- What assets do you have (space, yard, volunteers) that might be used to respond in service to your community in light of the pandemic?
- If someone contracts COVID-19, how will you communicate with your congregation and members who may have come into contact with that individual, while remembering privacy and pastoral care?
- If someone who has been in your building contracts COVID-19, how will you conduct an intensive cleaning prior to its next use?
- How will you communicate your safety plan and best practices to the congregation?
- How will you continue to offer online ministry?

Other Questions to Consider

While guidance as to specific practices is given in the guidelines, it is also important for each congregation, in their own context, to engage with and consider practical questions, as follows:

- Given what you have learned during the time of streaming worship, including non-Eucharistic worship (forms of the Divine Office and other ways of praying), how will your worship be different? Will you continue to stream worship or offer online options?

- How will you encourage smaller group (less than 50 people) activities (such as online Bible studies, Sunday School, etc.) in addition to worship?
- How will you cap attendance as required in your space while still providing room for members of the community to join you?
- How will you limit the number of people serving in worship (such as lectors, acolytes, multiple clergy, etc.), so that more people may be able to attend in the congregation?
- How might parishioners invite others to join them in returning to worship?
- How will you discourage the receiving line after church and/or congregating after worship services and at other times?
- How will greeters/sides persons help to monitor adherence to attendance and other guidelines? How will they also model masking and physical distance?
- If offering outdoor worship opportunities, how will you ensure safety which is equal to or greater than indoor worship?
- Do you have the masks and cleaning supplies needed to clean the common spaces?
- How will you ensure cleanliness and sanitation of the following items and spaces? Worship leaflets/bulletins, the spaces where smaller groups gather during the week or on a Sunday, church office activities, playgrounds, bathrooms, etc. Physical items such as the altar, pulpit, lectern (including microphones), kneelers, communion rail.
- How will you ensure the sanitization and safety practices for the following people and activities? (Altar Guild, Sunday School workers, Greeters/Sides persons, Acolytes, musicians, money counters, seniors and at-risk people)
- Will you celebrate with a special first day back to worship liturgy? If so, how will you try to make sure that as many people as possible can feel part of this special occasion (even where physical distancing requirements mean that not everyone can attend the same liturgy in person?)

Appendix C
Application
for Re-opening a Church to In-Person Gatherings for
THE **AMBER STAGE**

This questionnaire is available on the Website/COVID HUB in Fillable PDF FORM

*This questionnaire is intended to assist your parish in confirming that you have considered all of the steps and decisions you will need to make to move ahead safely with the **AMBER stage** of the return to our buildings. Please return this to the Diocesan Office either by scanning the signed copy and emailing to pandemic@ontario.anglican.ca or by mailing to the Diocesan Office (165 Ontario Street, Suite 4&5, Kingston Ontario, K7L2Y6). For timing reasons, email is preferred.*

******Parishes may not enter the Amber Stage or hold in person worship services until this document has been returned to the Diocesan Center (Pandemic@Ontario.Anglican.ca) and a response returned.******

CHURCH NAME _____

PARISH/REGION _____

1. Have you reviewed Loving our Neighbours **AMBER Stage** and considered how these guidelines may impact your plan to return to in-person worship and other gatherings?

Yes___ No___

2. What (specifics) will you do to prepare the church building for re-entry and wider use in the **Amber Stage**? Who will do this work?

3. How many people can your worship space or the space(s) where you intend to hold worship accommodate while complying with the requirements set out in the **Amber Stage Guidelines**, in households sitting two metres apart in all directions? (Must be no more than 50, including clergy or laity serving). Have you reviewed the Space Planning Guide?

Yes___ No___ Maximum capacity of your space_____

4. How will you ensure cleanliness and sanitization of the following items and spaces?
- a. Physical items such as pews, the altar, pulpit, lectern, kneelers, communion rail.

 - b. Bathrooms

 - c. Other common spaces or high-touch areas

5. How and who will sanitize worship and other spaces between any worship services?

6. Which of the following have you developed a plan for and intend to proceed or continue with?

- a. Indoor worship
 - i. Services of the Word
Yes___ No___
 - ii. Eucharist

Yes___ No___

iii. Weddings

Yes___ No___

iv. Funerals

Yes___ No___

v. Baptism

Yes___ No___

b. Fellowship or Formation activities

Yes___ No___

c. Food sustainability programs (food banks, meal programs)

Yes___ No___

d. Building use by 12-steps groups

Yes___ No___

e. Building use by licenced day care

Yes___ No___

f. Use by other renters

Yes___ No___

g. Return of clergy and staff to church offices

Yes___ No___

7. If someone who has attended in-person worship or fellowship at a parish activity or volunteered with a food sustainability program contracts COVID-19, do you have a plan for how you will communicate with your congregation, members and clients who may have come into contact with that individual, while remembering privacy and pastoral care?

Yes___ No___

8. On which date are you applying to re-open?

9. What practical support do you need from the Bishop or Diocesan Office to help with the implementation of these plans?

10. Any other notes, questions or concerns

Signed:

Incumbent

Print Name
Date

Signature

Parish Re-opening Coordinator

Print Name
Date

Signature

Churchwardens

Print Name
Date

Signature

Print Name
Date

Signature

Appendix D

Self-Screening for COVID-19

THE AMBER STAGE

Self-Screening Questions

Everyone should self-screen before attending worship or another parish function. Clergy and lay pastoral visitors are to self-screen before carrying out pastoral visits.

If you feel at all unwell, and particularly if you have any possible symptoms of COVID-19, no matter how slight, stay home.

The Ontario self-assessment can be completed on-line. It can be found at <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/self-assessment/>

Or complete the self-assessment on the following page.



COVID-19

Please complete the following questions before leaving your house today.

Name: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____

Do you have any of the following new or worsening symptoms?



Yes
No

Fever/Chills



Yes
No

Cough



Yes
No

Difficulty breathing/
Shortness of breath



Yes
No

Sore throat/
Difficulty swallowing



Yes
No

Runny nose
(unrelated to
seasonal allergies)



Yes
No

Loss of taste
or smell



Yes
No

Not feeling well,
headache, unexplained
tiredness and muscle aches



Yes
No

Nausea, vomiting,
diarrhea,
abdominal pain



Yes
No

In the last 14 days, have you had close physical contact with a person who:

- was sick with a respiratory illness (had a new or worsening cough, fever or difficulty breathing)?
- has returned from travel outside of Canada in the last 14 days?
- was a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19?



Yes
No

In the last 14 days, have you travelled outside of Canada?



If you answered **YES** to any of these questions, **please stay home**.

If you are feeling unwell, contact your health care provider or call **Telehealth Ontario** at **1-866-797-0000** to speak to a registered nurse.



COVID-19 Please complete before entering the child care centre

1. Does your child have any of the following new or worsening symptoms?*



Fever > 37.8°C



Cough



Difficulty breathing



Loss of taste or smell

If "YES": Stay home, self-isolate & get tested or contact your child's health care provider.

2. Does your child have any of the following new or worsening symptoms?*



Sore throat, painful swallowing



Stuffy/runny nose



Headache



Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea



Feeling unwell, muscle aches, feeling tired

If "YES" to 1 symptom:

- Stay home for 24 hours from when symptom started.
- If improving in 24 hours, can return to child care. No test needed.
- If not improving, or getting worse, self-isolate & get tested.

If "YES" to 2 or more symptoms:

- Stay home, self-isolate & get tested or contact your child's health care provider.

3. Has your child travelled outside of Canada in the past 14 days? Yes No

4. Has your child been identified as a close contact of someone with COVID-19? Yes No

5. Has your child been instructed to stay home and self-isolate? Yes No

If you answered "YES" to questions 3, 4 or 5:

- Your child must stay home, self-isolate & follow the advice of public health.

*Children who have an existing health condition identified by a health care provider that gives them the symptoms should not answer YES, unless the symptom is new, different or getting worse. Look for changes from your child's normal symptoms.

Appendix E

Sample Waiver for Rental Groups

THE AMBER STAGE

In connection with the use of the Premises, the Renter has already provided the Church/Parish with proof of Third Party Insurance.

TO: The PARISH/CHURCH OF _____,
a Church of the of the Anglican Diocese of Ontario , having an address at
_____, in the Municipality of _____ ,
Ontario

I, _____ on behalf of _____
(hereinafter referred to as the "Organization"), agree to comply with the Ontario government COVID-19 Guidelines in effect from time to time (hereinafter referred to as the "Guidelines") as well as any guidelines that may be in place from the Local Health Unit, Diocese and Church in our use of the facility for the purpose of _____

I further acknowledge that I am responsible for ensuring that the Organization, and members of said Organization, are compliant with the Guidelines while using the Facility.

I further acknowledge that you are providing the Facility only with no obligation to perform any hygiene or cleaning services and that the Organization, and its members, are solely responsible for ensuring that proper hygiene and cleaning practices are followed both before and after the use of the Facility.

I am authorized to sign on behalf of and to bind the Organization.

DATED at _____, Ontario, this ____ day of _____, 2020.
(SIGNED AND DELIVERED)

in the presence of: _____ Witness

Appendix F

Other Resources

THE AMBER STAGE

Province of Ontario Ministry of Health

Self Assessment Tool <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/self-assessment/>
COVID ALERT Mobile App <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/covidalert>
Stop the Spread
<https://www.ontario.ca/page/covid-19-stop-spread#physical-distancing>

Government of Canada

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19.html>

Health Units (Each has Signage which can be printed)

Hastings & Prince Edward Health Unit <https://hpepublichealth.ca/>
Frontenac, Lennox & Addington Health Unit <https://www.kflaph.ca/en/index.aspx>
Leeds, Grenville & Lanark District Health Unit <https://healthunit.org/coronavirus/>

Ecclesiastical Insurance Resources

https://ecclesiastical.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/EIO_RC_COVID-19_Cleaning.pdf
<https://ecclesiastical.ca/riskcontrolkit/covid-19-a-guide-to-safely-reopening-your-organization-during-the-pandemic/>

Effective Disinfectants & Cleaning:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-healthproducts/disinfectants/covid-19/list.html>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sZVZJqSvvgXa8>

SEE THE COVID 19 HUB FOR ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Appendix G Funeral Checklist THE AMBER STAGE

The maximum and total number allowed of people at an indoor funeral liturgy in a church building is the lesser of:

- i) The calculated figure based on physical distancing
- ii) 30% of usual seating capacity
- iii) 50 persons.

The BAO has its own guidelines and regulations for services held in Funeral Homes (see below).

It is important to inform both the funeral director (if there is one) and the family of the bereaved what this number is, and clarify that the number allowed includes all persons who are providing leadership or assistance in the service, except funeral home staff onsite to ensure physical distancing and other protocols are observed.

If the space allows for appropriate physical distancing and other required protocols to be observed, the number of people in attendance for an outdoor funeral on church grounds must not exceed numbers allowed by the Bereavement Authority of Ontario (BAO), including clergy, musicians, and others assisting in the celebration, with the exception for funeral home staff as noted above.

If the funeral home is unable to staff at a ratio of one staff person for every ten people in attendance, volunteers from the congregation may serve in this capacity, providing they are trained to do so.

Responsibilities before, during, and after the service:

Funeral Home personnel:

- gather information about and maintain a sign-in list of all attendees, a copy of which should be kept in the congregation's records for a period of three years
- be present at a ratio of 1:10, or as required by the BAO
- transport casket to, in, and from the church
- direct family and attendees in entering and exiting church (including the mandatory use of masks)
- direct family and attendees at the cemetery

Church personnel:

- supply hand sanitizer
- make available disposable masks upon entry for those who may not have one
- ensure elevator/lift is appropriately sanitized after each use
- routinely wipe handrails and door handles
- clean washroom(s) available for use
- mark out safe seating
- provide worship materials for one-time use
- remove all other books etc. from the sanctuary
- the Incumbent (and Presider, if someone other than the Incumbent) is responsible for the conduct of the service

Attendees:

- follow the direction of funeral home and Church personnel
- be sure you are registered when you arrive
- wear a mask (either your own or one that is provided)
- remain in your seat for the entire service once you have been seated, unless the Eucharist is celebrated – in the latter case, follow the direction of those overseeing the movement to and from Communion
- take all masks, worship materials, and used tissues home for disposal (please do not leave them in the church)
- maintain appropriate physical distance (minimum of 2 meters)

Other directives pertaining to the congregation's worship, and those issued by the local health unit and the Bereavement Authority of Ontario (BAO) are to be followed.

The BAO Covid-19 page: <https://thebao.ca/covid-19-update-links/>

Handshakes, hugs, receptions, or the serving of food or beverages are not permitted in the buildings or grounds of the church during the Amber Stage.

It is recommended that times of visitation be held in the funeral home rather than the church building.

The BAO has issued the following Restrictions (as of Nov 23) for funerals held in a funeral home:

To protect your family and staff:

You must follow this chart of COVID-19 safety restrictions

BAO DIRECTIVE	GREEN - PREVENT	YELLOW - PROTECT	ORANGE - RESTRICT	RED - CONTROL	LOCKDOWN
NOV. 23, 2020	Drive-Thru permitted	Drive-Thru permitted	Drive-Thru permitted	Drive-Thru permitted	Drive-Thru permitted
NUMBERS	30% of capacity with physical distancing to a maximum of 50 for each room.	30% of capacity with physical distancing to a maximum of 50 for each room.	30% of capacity with physical distancing to a maximum of 50 for each room.	30% of capacity with physical distancing to a maximum of 50 people for the ENTIRE facility	10 people indoors for the ENTIRE facility OR 10 people outdoors Total - Not combined No line-ups or 'cycling' of guests. 1 entire group at one time.
STAFF - INDOORS	1:10 staff to guest ratio not required	1 staff member for every 10 guests	1 staff member for every 10 guests	1 staff member for every 10 guests	1 staff member for every 10 guests
FOOD/DRINK	If permitted by local health unit	If permitted by local health unit	No food or drinks	No food or drinks	No food or drinks
GUEST MANAGEMENT	Screening and logging of guests	Screening and logging of guests Attendances scheduled by appointment only	Screening and logging of guests Attendances scheduled by appointment only No line-ups or "cycling" of guests. 1 entire group at one time.	Screening & logging of guests Attendances scheduled by appointment only No line-ups or "cycling" of guests. 1 entire group at one time.	Screening & logging of guests Attendances scheduled by appointment only No line-ups or 'cycling' of guests. 1 entire group at one time.
CEMETERIES (Cemeteries can limit to less than these numbers.)	Maximum 100 people with funeral director in charge	Maximum 100 people with funeral director in charge, and 1 staff for 10 guests	Maximum 100 people with funeral director in charge, and 1 staff for 10 guests	Maximum 50 people with funeral director in charge and 1 staff for 10 guests	10 people indoors for the ENTIRE facility or 10 people outdoors Total - Not combined No cycling of guests
CREMATORIUMS and ALKALINE HYDROLYSIS FACILITIES	30% of capacity with physical distancing to a maximum of 50 for each room.	30% of capacity with physical distancing to a maximum of 50 for each room.	30% of capacity with physical distancing to a maximum of 50 for each room.	30% of capacity with physical distancing to a maximum of 50 people for the ENTIRE facility	10 people indoors for the ENTIRE facility or 10 people outdoors Total - Not combined No line-ups or 'cycling' of guests. 1 entire group at one time.
ALL FUNERAL SERVICES AT ANY LOCATION	*Wear a mask / Physical distancing of 2 metres between people / Wash your hands / Disinfect and clean facilities	*Same PLUS continuous cleaning of surfaces. 15 minute interval between visitations for detailed disinfection of facility.	*Same PLUS continuous cleaning of surfaces. 15 minute interval between visitations for detailed disinfection of facility.	*Same PLUS continuous cleaning of surfaces. 15 minute interval between visitations for detailed disinfection of facility.	*Same PLUS continuous cleaning of surfaces. 15 minute interval between visitations for detailed disinfection of facility.

This chart of restrictions is for bereavement establishments to follow based on the Government of Ontario's COVID-19 framework.

Thank you.

COVID-19 Safety – Ready...together



Nov. 23, 2020

Appendix H

Wedding Checklist THE AMBER STAGE

The maximum and total number of people allowed at an indoor ceremony is the lesser of:

- i) The calculated number based on physical distancing
- ii) 30% of usual seating capacity
- iii) 50 persons.

It is important to inform the couple what this number is and to clarify that the number allowed includes all persons who are providing leadership in service, including the Presider.

If the space allows for appropriate physical distancing and other required protocols to be observed, the number of people in attendance for an outdoor marriage liturgy should not exceed 50, including clergy, bridal party, wedding planners, musicians, and others assisting in the celebration.

An individual should be assigned to ensure appropriate upkeep takes place between each use of the washroom. Ideally, there should also be one or two extra individuals on hand to ensure those in attendance comply with all health protocols.

A list of attendees must be filed in the parish office in case contact tracing is required and kept for a period of 30 days.

It is recommended that single-use worship leaflets, if used, be placed on pews or chairs ahead of time. Service books and hymnbooks must not be used. Those in attendance should be asked to take their leaflet with them when they leave.

Upon arrival, guests must be asked if they have been out of the country within the last two weeks, or if they are showing any symptoms that may indicate COVID-19 infection (e.g. fever, cough, difficulty breathing, etc.), or if they have been exposed to anyone showing such symptoms. If a guest answers in the affirmative to any of these questions, they should remain in their vehicle before, during, and after an outdoor ceremony, or asked to remain outside the building for an indoor liturgy.

Physical distancing is to be maintained by all in attendance, and masks must be worn by each guest above two years of age, unless this is contra-indicated for medical reasons. It is recommended that extra masks be available in case some guests arrive without one. Even if the gathering is outside, the wearing of masks is important because people are remaining in proximity to one another for an extended period of time

Ushers may lead people to chairs while remaining physically distanced. Ushers should also ensure, as much as possible, that people are complying with distancing and other health protocols. In the case of an outdoor ceremony, if people are bringing their own chairs, the ushers should ensure these are placed in such a manner as to ensure physical distancing. People living in the same household need not physically distance from one another.

Communicate to the wedding party that those who have been exposed to COVID-19 or someone exhibiting its symptoms, or are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, a cold, the flu, or who are ill themselves must stay home. (This also applies to clergy.)

No congregational singing. A soloist may sing, provided they are no closer than four metres (13ft) to the nearest other person.

Ensure everyone needing to be amplified has a microphone dedicated to their use alone.

The Presider must wear a mask or face shield unless a four-metre distance from congregants and couple can be maintained at all times.

For the blessing of the rings, a stand with a suitable plate or other receptacle should be placed near the couple. The rings are placed there. After the blessing of the rings, each member of the couple picks up the appropriate ring and places it on the finger of their spouse. Therefore, the Presider need not touch the rings or have them placed on their service book.

The Presider should not wrap their stole around the couple's hands for the blessing of the marriage. Likewise, the blessing should not involve the Presider touching the couple.

The wedding party must be physically distanced, and masks must be worn. The couple may remove their masks to greet each other at the appropriate point in the service.

Receiving lines, handshakes, hugs, receptions, or the serving of food or beverages are not permitted in the buildings or grounds of the church.

Other applicable protocols for indoor or outdoor worship are to be observed.

Likewise, canonical requirements and policies concerning marriage in the Diocese remain in effect.

