



## PLANNING PARISH ACTIVITIES THAT INCLUDE MUSIC DURING PANDEMIC AS OF 10/8/20

While each person must consider their own safety and make their own decisions about participation in any parish activities, prayerful thought by parish leadership must lead each unique parish in setting guidelines. Parish procedures must accommodate state law and diocesan directives and should take into account latest scientific research, which is frequently updated.

### BASIC PRINCIPLES FOR GROUP SINGING AND OTHER MUSIC

- Limit indoor group events with singing or corporate speaking to 25 or fewer people, and outdoor to 50 or fewer. Anthems and other presentations are limited to six people.
- Attendees who participate in corporate singing or speaking must be distanced by ten feet, except wind players, who require double the space. People may sit together in family “pods.” *This is an increase in spacing from previous recommendations.*
- Speak and sing quietly.
- Shorten group gatherings and limit to 30 minutes when possible.
- All must wear effective masks.

### EXPLANATIONS AND MORE DETAIL

- I. General considerations for group singing and speaking
  - A. We must follow state law which is periodically updated.
  - B. We must follow diocesan directives which will be updated.
  - C. Each person should consider their personal safety as the primary guide to participation in any parish music activities, as they are the best judges of their own health.
  - D. The latest scientific research and guidelines from parishes across the US were consulted as our group of local Episcopal church musicians met to develop recommendations.
  - E. Each parish is unique. Group activities, including music activities, will need to be adapted to particular situations after prayerful consideration and judgment by parish leadership and participants.
  - F. As new scientific research is conducted, guidelines may change and local decisions will need to be assessed and modified accordingly.
- II. Music considerations
  - A. Research has shown that singing, speaking, and playing non-wind instruments in groups carry the identical risks. Guidelines can be the same for all those activities, whether in rehearsals, services, or other activities.
  - B. Playing wind instruments requires more distancing as performance precludes wearing masks, thus spreading droplets and aerosol farther.

- III. Group consensus
  - A. Limit participants, including leaders, to a maximum of 25 participants at indoor events and to 50 for outdoor events, with a limit of six people in small groups singing or delivering anthems or other non-congregational music or presentations, masked and properly distanced.
  - B. Everyone present should speak and sing quietly to minimize aerosol and droplet dispersal. Rather than speaking or singing loudly, leaders should use microphones to maintain personal quiet volume.
  - C. All present should distance from one another by ten feet, including leaders, congregation, and cantors. Families may sit in pods, distanced from the next pod or individual by ten feet. Wind players should distance twice as far as others and wear masks except when they are playing their instruments. This is an increase in distancing from previous recommendations.
  - D. Two websites with information about wind players
    - 1. <https://music.uiowa.edu/school-music-covid-19-policies#distancing>
    - 2. <https://www.classicfm.com/music-news/coronavirus/how-safe-is-your-instrument-science-on-singing-woodwind-brass/>
  - E. Air circulation and air filters are important.
    - 1. When inside, maximize air circulation with fans and through the HVAC system.
    - 2. Leave windows open as possible.
    - 3. Meet outdoors as much as possible.
  - F. Continuous group singing or speaking should not last over thirty minutes in any one space.
    - 1. No corporate speaking or singing in our service lasts more than thirty minutes at one time, so the regular service should be fine.
    - 2. Consider shortening and eliminating portions of the service, including readings, hymns, and other sections as allowed by the BCP. This will minimize accumulation of the virus in the space.
    - 3. Changing spaces after thirty minutes is a viable option for classes or rehearsals.
- IV. Masks should be worn by all singers and speakers and congregation members all the time.
  - A. Select masks with care. Some masks being marketed actually increase the dangerous spread of droplets and aerosols.
  - B. Masks which are not disposable should be washed often, after almost every wearing.
  - C. Scientific studies continue but it is already clear that fit, fabric, and style of mask are important.
  - D. A Duke University study of mask effectiveness including descriptions and photographs can be found at this link: <https://hartfordhealthcare.org/about-us/news-press/news-detail?articleid=27691&publicid=395>.
  - E. Masks which are effective
    - 1. Masks should cover nostrils and mouth and fit tightly around all edges, with special attention to sides and chin.
    - 2. N95 and most disposable medical and surgical masks provide best protection for wearer and for others.
    - 3. Most homemade masks made of two, or better yet, three layers of cotton are effective.

4. Inexpensive disposable medical masks are very effective and can be purchased in quantity at a cost of about 15¢ each. Consider having some at all entrances to give to participants if needed.

F. Masks which are ineffective or increase the spread of virus droplets and aerosols.

1. Clear face shields and other masks which are loose or open at chin or on sides release almost all breath, including all droplets and aerosols, and should not be used.
2. Fleece, which is lightweight fabric brushed to make it thicker, increases the dispersion of droplets and aerosols and should not be used, especially if made of synthetic fabric.
3. Bandannas and “Gaiters,” which are circular neckerchiefs pulled up over the face, spread aerosols and droplets and are dangerous.
4. Beware so-called “singers masks” which are being marketed. Many are no more effective, and sometimes less effective, than properly fitted cotton home-made masks.