

Dear saints,

Out of an abundance of caution, we recommend transitioning from in-person worship to online or other forms of worship for the next four weeks in our Diocese. This recommendation comes from the [Thriving in the COVID World Task Force](#) and me. Kindly live stream or record your liturgy from the church with a small group as long as you adhere to appropriate safeguards in our guidelines. You may also conduct funerals and special liturgies, but with less than ten people. I apologize in advance for all the inconvenience this change will cause. Thank you in advance, for your attention and efforts to safeguard the saints entrusted to our care.

Let me ask Dean Dan Burner, one of the Co-Chairs of the Task Force, to explain why we have decided to move in this direction immediately.

With affection,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A. L. S.', with a long, sweeping horizontal line underneath.

Prince

When we established the guidelines for suspension of services and the protocols for those services, we were looking for a metric that would be consistent across all our counties in the diocese regardless of population. There are many dashboards available on the internet, but we wanted to select one that we felt was reliable and that would get us all on the same page. As a result, we selected the State of New York and the specific data point of number of positive tests as a percentage of total tests on any particular day. This metric has served us well to this point in time. All churches in the diocese are currently under suspension except in Monroe and Ontario counties. Meanwhile, there is a current surge in cases in the United States and if we look at data that shows cases almost all of the diocese is experiencing a surge that is larger than the April event. As the result of information from medical professionals at the U of R and other key organizations, we have been made aware of a dashboard that we believe has better data than we have been using. This website is covidactnow.org. The new metric we will be using is cases per 100k in each county. The

Thriving in the COVID World Task Force needs time to evaluate the specific number that will trigger suspension of in-person services in the future, but in the meantime, we will suspend in-person services in our Diocese beginning this Sunday, November 8 for a four-week period, with the possibility of gathering again on December 6. This potential gathering will depend on the course of the infections over the next four weeks. At that time, we will have more definitive guidance for our parishes. Above all, the most important guide is that we and our parishes feel safe.

Very Rev. Dan Burner

Thriving in the COVID World Task Force

Question and Answer

(These questions were asked on the Diocesan Check-in with Bishop Singh, November 5.

You can view the recorded check-in [HERE](#))

Q: Is that effective this Sunday?

A: Yes

Q: When is the earliest we might gather again in-person?

A: *December 6, depending on the course of the virus.*

Q: What about small group gatherings?

A: *Small Groups of 10 or fewer people may gather as long as they follow all protocols of physical distancing, mask wearing, and contact tracing.*

Q: Should outside groups that use our building suspend their activities as well?

A: *Outside groups may continue to gather as long as the space will allow physical distancing and they follow all protocols.*

Q: May we gather outside?

A: *Yes, weather permitting and following protocols.*

Q: What does this mean for funerals?

A: *Funerals with family only and a maximum of 10 persons following the protocols would be permitted.*

Q: Can we worship with 10 or fewer?

A: *Yes, If you can be assured that no more than 10 persons would attend and all protocols are followed.*

Q: Can we offer Eucharist?

A: *Yes, following all protocols for gathering and the Eucharist.*

If you have more questions or need clarification please contact the [Very Rev. Dan Burner](#).