



Protocols/best practices when COVID comes to a congregation

First, prepare for the eventuality of COVID appearing in your midst. Be clear about your protocols and enforce them. Familiarize yourself with the Virginia Department of Health and CDC websites to be able to access the latest guidance regarding quarantine, isolation, and terms such as “close contact” (being within six feet of someone for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period), and to understand the process of case investigation and contact tracing.

- VDH: <https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/coronavirus/prevention-tips/contact-tracing/>
- CDC: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/quarantine-isolation.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fif-you-are-sick%2Fquarantine.html

Then, if someone in the congregation is diagnosed with COVID-19 who has been on campus during the time they would have been contagious:

- Encourage the person who tested positive to speak with the Health Department when the Health Department personnel call to investigate the case and to follow the CDC guidance regarding quarantine.
- Call your local Virginia Health Department District to ask for guidance and offer assistance in contact tracing. (Find your district and how to contact them here: <https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/local-health-districts/>)
- Notify everyone who was present on campus and might have been exposed. Let them know the date and time of the potential exposure if possible and send them the two links above and encourage them to get tested and follow the CDC guidelines. It helps to summarize those guidelines in your communication as well as providing the direct link. Include information about local testing options as well, including the guidance that the best time to test is 3-5 days after exposure and to isolate until they receive negative test results.
- While HIPAA laws are aimed at health professionals and organizations, it is still important to maintain confidentiality in these communications. Simply say, “someone” who attended the [service, meeting, gathering] on [date and time] has subsequently been diagnosed with COVID-19.
- After those who are most likely to be affected have been contacted, consider notifying the wider congregation about the situation, outlining the steps already taken and suggesting as

a precaution that they monitor themselves for symptoms and sending them the links to guidelines as well.

- Keep in touch with those who have tested positive and organize food drop off or other help as needed.
- Consider whether to add protocols or temporarily suspend services/meetings.
- Consider regular testing for staff and make sure staff have what they need to be able to work from home.
- Contact the diocesan Canon to the Ordinary at 1-800-DIOCESE to share steps taken and for any questions or support. This also ensures the Bishop is kept informed of COVID's impact throughout the Diocese.