

The Episcopal Church Diocese of Central Florida

The Right Reverend Gregory O. Brewer, Bishop

March 4, 2020

CORONAVIRUS, COMMUNION AND THE DIOCESE OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

Dear Beloved in Christ,

In response to the rising concerns over the spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus, my goal in writing this letter is three-fold: to provide you with precautionary guidance, to share ways you can actively be a part of responsible public worship and, most importantly, to encourage you.

In his role as my appointed Disaster Relief Coordinator for the Diocese, Deacon John Motis has been in contact with our friends at Episcopal Relief and Development (ERD) and did participate in an ERD-led coronavirus webinar earlier this week. Pursuant to Deacon John's report from the webinar and based on supplemental research, I am making the following recommendations:

1. Parishioners should not intinct their own communion wafer. Either receive from the common cup or allow the Eucharistic Minister to take the wafer from your open palm, dip the wafer in the wine and place it on your tongue. If neither of these options appeals to you, it is perfectly acceptable to receive communion by only receiving the consecrated bread.
2. If a common cup is used, the chalice bearer should fully wipe the both sides of the rim and turn the chalice after each person has received.

Explanation: The church has always taught that receiving communion "in one kind" is still receiving the whole sacrament. *The Book of Common Prayer* (BCP) also states that the church always offers communion in both kinds (BCP, pp. 407-408). Moreover, research shows that there have been no reported cases of disease spread through the common cup and the risk is quite low.

3. Honor those who do not desire their hands to be touched. It is more than appropriate to greet without shaking hands including the passing of the peace. Elbow bumps, hand on the shoulder, or head nods are suitable alternatives.

*"He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom,
so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ." - Colossians 1:28*

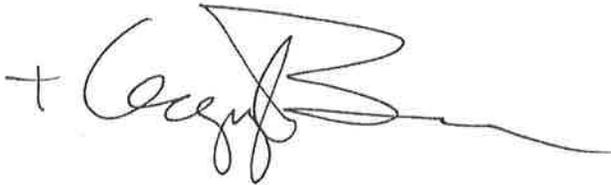
1017 E. Robinson St. □ Orlando, FL 32801-2023 □ 407/423-3567 □ Email: bpbrewer@cfdiocese.org
WATS: 1-800-299-3567 □ FAX 407/872-0006 □ [HTTP://www.cfdiocese.org](http://www.cfdiocese.org)

4. If you are ill, please stay home and ask that communion be brought to you.
5. Those who are administering communion should use a hand sanitizer prior to the start of The Great Thanksgiving.
6. As is already true in our churches, the use of hand sanitizer and regular hand washing for at least 20 seconds should be standard procedure in dealing with children. The same is true for treating high touch areas in our churches (e.g. door knobs, altar rail, etc.) with a disinfectant.

This is a time for heartfelt intercession. Please pray for God's protection from harm and offer healing prayers for those who are ill.

While we should not be given to overblown fears, our communities and our parishioners should be confident that we are doing what we can to lower the risk of infection and be agents of care and compassion. In this time, may God use our churches as places of healing, hope, and pastoral care.

Blessings and Peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink, starting with a small cross symbol followed by the name 'Gregory O. Brewer' in a cursive script. The signature ends with a long horizontal flourish.

Gregory O. Brewer
Bishop