



# The Episcopal Diocese of East Carolina

The Right Reverend Robert S. Skirving, Bishop

April 29, 2021

To the Clergy & Churchwardens of the Diocese of East Carolina:

Dear friends and colleagues,

Greetings in the name of our risen Lord Jesus Christ!

Although it came a day later than we may have expected, North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper has issued an Executive Order this week that impacts our gatherings for worship. [Executive Order No. 209](#) goes into effect tomorrow, April 30<sup>th</sup> at 5:00pm and will continue in force through June 1, 2021 at 5:00pm, unless we hear otherwise before then. As a result of this order, I want to affirm the following:

- 1) Within Diocesan parameters, clergy and churchwardens will continue to have the responsibility for setting and implementing their own congregational plan, including giving notice of any changes you make as a result of this letter.
- 2) Indoor Worship – This new order offers no change on capacities for indoor worship. We continue with a limit of the lower of 50% of the seated fire capacity or whatever number of people can be welcomed while maintaining 6 feet of distance between household groups. (Section 3.9.c) Masks are still to be worn for public indoor gatherings. (Section 1.3)
- 3) Outdoor Worship – Masks are no longer required for outdoor gatherings or other outdoor activities. (Section 1.3) In keeping with Section 1.5, however, we would recommend that you maintain 6 feet of spacing between households and encourage those who have not yet been fully vaccinated to wear a mask when they cannot maintain this distance. It is also recommended that clergy and Eucharistic ministers be masked during communion.
- 4) Singing – For now, we will continue to limit singing to soloists and small ensembles, both indoors and outdoors, in keeping with the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services document titled [“Interim Guidance for Places of Worship and Religious Services \(March 26, 2021\)”](#) until we receive updated guidance from a reliable source.
- 5) Other sections of this Executive Order will be useful to those planning for Child Care Facilities (Section 3.3), Children’s Day or Overnight Camps (Section 3.4) and Meeting Spaces (Section 3.8).

Let us be patient and faithful as we continue this journey! Questions may be directed to Canon Mollie Roberts or to me, by telephone or by email.

Yours in Christ,

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Post Office Box 1336 Kinston, North Carolina 28503

Telephone 252-522-0885 Facsimile 252-523-5272 [www.diocese-eastcarolina.org](http://www.diocese-eastcarolina.org)