

CITY OF BRISTOL MAYORS OFFICE

Sent: Sunday, October 25, 2020, 12:29:45 PM EDT

Subject: Covid Community Update

Dear Church Leaders,

It has been awhile since I have done a status email concerning Covid19. After a relatively quiet summer as a community, both the State and Bristol have seen a spike in increased positive infection rates and are currently at Orange Alert. If we get to Red Alert, I have to make the decision of whether Bristol goes back to Sector 2 rules. This will affect the rules for the assembly of churches. Thus, I am asking for your cooperation to discuss these issues with your members, especially the vulnerable senior population, so that we do not get to Red status.

According to a recent update issued from Health Director Marco Palmeri, “the most common denominator for these cases has consistently been social gatherings and recreational (non-school related) sports. While not every case presents severe symptoms, requires hospitalization or causes death, they all have a tremendous adverse effect on the community, stressing our schools, emergency services and other critical infrastructures.” Due to these factors, the Health Director is recommending all recreational events, gatherings and youth sports **be postponed until further notice**. If your Church is sponsoring such activities, please review and take appropriate action. Please note that it could even be a small gathering of people from different households who create a “spreader event” (if one of them was asymptomatic and positive) if they are in close proximity for more than 15 minutes, engaged in singing or other activities with potential of expelling particles into the air.

Attendance at parties or ceremonies that include a large number of people from outside your congregation’s “usual bubble” put your church members at risk. We have the responsibility to limit these risks. We are all in this together, and to date, we have done an excellent job of protecting the health of all. As holidays approach, we need to commit to continued vigilance and due diligence.

It is important to note that the health parameters have changed over the last few weeks and the classification of close contacts, exposures and all the factors associated with it are determined by the Centers of Disease Control. Please click here to review the [CDC guidelines](#).

COVID-19 is spread mainly via person-to-person contact through contaminated air droplets from coughing and sneezing by an infected person. As with controlling the spread of other viruses, we urge everyone to discuss the following preventive measures with your members:

- Wash your hands frequently, but especially after using the restroom and before preparing or consuming food. Using soap and hot water, wash for about 20 seconds. Be sure to also wash your fingertips. When soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer.
- Avoid coughing or sneezing into your hands or in the air. Always try to cough or sneeze into a tissue, then throw the tissue away. If you don’t have a tissue, cough/sneeze inside the elbow of your arm.
- As much as you can, avoid touching your eyes, mouth, and nose.
- Wear a face covering (mask) whenever there is a likelihood that you or your family members will be in the presence of others.
- Maintain social distancing (at least 6 feet) between yourself and others when at church or other places with people outside of your immediate family.

I am also attaching link of the [differences between Quarantine and Isolation](#). This seems to be a main point of contention and anxiety. Please note that those with a positive Covid19 diagnosis are considered contagious for 10 days per the [CDC](#). The isolation period ends after 10 days if the positive case has been symptom free and in good health for a period of no less than 24 hours.

For those who are a close contact of a positive case, the incubation period for Covid19 in one's system is 14 days. You cannot test out of a quarantine because it could literally happen that you begin to exhibit symptoms on Day 13.

As COVID cases around the state continue to climb, I want you to be aware of free COVID testing in Bristol. We strongly encourage everyone to be tested as there have been many asymptomatic cases.

- The Community Health Center on North Main St. has recently extended their testing hours to be from 8:30 am to 4:00 at 395 North Main Street site in Bristol. You can get more information at <https://www.chc1.com/covid-19-testing/>.
- The Wheeler Clinic Family Health and Wellness Center will be offering COVID pop-up testing at Bristol Eastern High School on Wed., Oct 28th from 10am-2pm. Anyone interested in being tested is welcome.
- The State of CT also has a strong Covid19 website. The site can be accessed by clicking [here](#), including up-to-date travel advisory information.

We do realize that as the Covid19 crisis continues, people's anxiety and social isolation is increasing, making their connection to faith-based organizations even more important. Please do what you can to continue to minister through any socially distanced means that you can, and check on your members who do have internet capabilities and may appreciate phone calls and check ins.

As a community, we continue to plan for the winter season and how to create a Winter Overflow program for our most vulnerable population – those living outside. If your Church has the means to contribute funds to that effort, please let me know. We are working to identify a space as St. Vincent DePaul is under construction to expand their ability to serve more clients and may not be able to do overflow as they have in the past.

Food insecurity and reduced incomes due to Covid19 continue to be an issue as well. The City has been sponsoring Food Box Distributions since early summer. The last one is scheduled for this Friday, October 30, from 3-6pm at Lake Compounce. FoodShare also comes to Gaylord Street every other Monday at 9:15am including tomorrow, October 26th, and every other Tuesday at Cambridge Park (Davis Drive) with the next one scheduled for November 3rd. These are open to the public. Grace Baptist also has a Food Truck for Friday morning, November 6th in their parking lot. Several churches are also doing food drives, which is great as well.

Thank you for your assistance in keeping all of our citizens safe and healthy. Please do not hesitate to contact my office if you need additional assistance.

Sincerely,

Mayor Ellen Zoppo-Sassu