



The Office of the Presiding Bishop

## June 29, 2020 | Bishops Coordination Call

*Bishops coordination calls occur weekly and are not recorded. [Notes, resources and links](#) will be shared at the end of each week's session. Translation is available, and must be requested on Thursdays each week.*

### Notes

#### **Bishop Shannon Macvewan-Brown** (Episcopal Diocese of Vermont)

- [Prayer, For the Interim Time by John O'Donohue](#)

#### **The Presiding Bishop's Office** (Canon Mark Stevenson)

- Important dates and events
  - HoB meeting via Zoom, 7/28 and 29
  - Oregon Election, August 29, 2020
- Bishops and Canons Monday meetings shift to every other week in July
  - **No meeting next week, July 6**
  - Meetings: July 13 and 27
- Diocesan plans for re-entry are being collected, to be shared with all dioceses.
  - [Files may be downloaded for viewing here.](#)

#### **Religion in the Time of Plagues** (Dr. Joseph Fair, Ph.D., MPH, NBC/MSNBC News Scientist, virologist and epidemiologist)

- **Religion in the time of Plagues**
  - The faithful and non faithful alike tend to flock to churches during epidemics and pandemics.
  - Plagues are described in nearly all religious texts, including our own, indicating they have been with us since we first settled into groups. The Bible and other religious texts are some of our earliest public health manuals.
  - The Church and religious services can either be a major contributor in the spread of infectious diseases or they serve a major role in ending the pandemic.
  - While key to our faith, celebrating Holy Communion in large groups can and does contribute to the spread of disease, so it is during these times that we are compelled to adapt our rituals to serve the faithful, while not contributing to the problem.
- **Overview**
  - Epidemics and pandemics typically result from the mixing of humans, wildlife, and livestock kept or living in close proximity to one another.
  - COVID-19 is believed to have arisen from a Wuhan "Wet" or animal market. It is presently believed to have originated in bats.
  - The virus is most closely related to SARS from 2003, a virus that originated in China from a similar wet market but was quickly eradicated through aggressive public health response measures. The virus that causes COVID-19 disease is called SARS-CoV2.



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- **Coronaviruses**
  - Thousands and potentially millions are thought to exist.
  - One of two major causes of the common cold.
  - This coronavirus is new to humans, but not new to the world.
  - We react so strongly because we are completely immunologically naïve to this virus.
  - This is one of more contagious viruses we have seen in modern history.
  - It can and is transmitted asymptotically which makes screening nearly impossible.
  - It is spread via the respiratory system through expelling droplets by coughing or speaking.
  - Infection occurs through contact with eyes, nose, or mouth.
- **Communion & COVID 19**
  - Any gathering of individuals in indoor spaces, no matter how well spaced, greatly increases the chances of spreading/catching the disease.
  - Whether inside or outside, require congregants wear masks and maintain at least 4-6 of distance. Make masks available for those who cannot buy them easily.
  - Consider adding more masses and having sign ups in order to have fewer individuals in each ceremony.
  - When possible, celebrate the mass outside. Doing so infinitely decreases the chances of spreading/catching the disease.
- **Ministering during a Pandemic**
  - Rather than a Church-based ministry, for some time your clergy may need to consider ministering to small groups in different locations. Keep the groups small and outside if possible. In some ways, this takes us back to the roots of Christian tradition.
  - Use your ministries to distribute science-based information from reputable sources. As much as you can, work to dispel conspiracy theories and explain the importance of everyone contributing to the solution.
  - Provide your clergy with the tools they need to protect themselves and prevent themselves from spreading the disease.
- [Slide deck](#)
- [Article](#): Coronavirus, What the Church Can Learn From The Black Death Pandemic, Rockbridge Seminary

## **Singing During the COVID-19 Pandemic** (Marty Wheeler Burnett, Virginia Theological Seminary)

- **Research Coalition of Music Organizations (updated 6/26/20)**

<https://www.nfhs.org/articles/unprecedented-international-coalition-led-by-performing-arts-organizations-to-commission-covid-19-study/> Over 100 music organizations, including Association of Anglican Musicians, have joined forces to sponsor research on aerosol transmission of COVID-19 by instrumentalists, singers, and actors. Studies are underway at University of Colorado Boulder and University of Maryland.

  - Preliminary results for woodwinds/brass by July 10
  - Preliminary results for singers by July 25
  - Evidence-based guidance available shortly thereafter



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- Full results this fall
- Relevant Articles:  
[https://drive.google.com/drive/u/1/folders/1PZ8RF3EytzUWGwfJNpu4fsyXc4E\\_u2Yi](https://drive.google.com/drive/u/1/folders/1PZ8RF3EytzUWGwfJNpu4fsyXc4E_u2Yi)  
Click on “Studies on Aerosol” folder for a collection of articles.
- **Tampa Bay Times article (6/27/20)**  
[https://www.tampabay.com/news/health/2020/06/26/marching-bands-arent-sure-how-to-handle-the-pandemic-so-they-commissioned-two-studies-involving-spit/?fbclid=IwAR0h7\\_4KwNPuDT-EIY10zyKTPKJrxfBPrVbaUKMTCCGgPT6\\_pgxYp6nIA\\_o](https://www.tampabay.com/news/health/2020/06/26/marching-bands-arent-sure-how-to-handle-the-pandemic-so-they-commissioned-two-studies-involving-spit/?fbclid=IwAR0h7_4KwNPuDT-EIY10zyKTPKJrxfBPrVbaUKMTCCGgPT6_pgxYp6nIA_o), Interview with Mark Spede, Director of Bands at Clemson University and President of the College Band Directors National Association, one of the leaders of the aforementioned coalition. Suggested possible adaptations for band to be able to resume – many could be applied to choirs:
  - Improved ventilation
  - Rehearsing outside when possible
  - Smaller ensembles
  - Seating/standing arrangements with greater distancing
  - Performing off-site and recording/streaming music
  - Masks
  - Replacing traditional uniforms with lighter weight, easier to clean alternatives.
  - “The goal here is not to get to 0 percent risk... The goal is to get the risk down to a point where people can feel comfortable participating in the activity.”
- **Interview with Kimberly Prather, Ph.D. (6/1/20)**, Distinguished Chair in Atmospheric Chemistry, UC San Diego  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PU8Hf\\_5-oLc&fbclid=IwAR1zsQIZka4ma6n39NWgOnos9WrfE5ghffa\\_VU6BGW-ZYzmQOJtTrZbr7A8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PU8Hf_5-oLc&fbclid=IwAR1zsQIZka4ma6n39NWgOnos9WrfE5ghffa_VU6BGW-ZYzmQOJtTrZbr7A8)
  - Clear, understandable explanation of the science of aerosol transmission of COVID-19
  - Practical solutions to reduce risks, including masks, distance (explanation of why 6 feet is not enough), meeting outdoors, improving ventilation systems, limiting length of time of exposure
- **Guidance for Music Classes in British Columbia During COVID-19 (6/26/20)**  
[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1KG2rE1rU-NENxbQsuYN20xnM9TBINn3Z/view?fbclid=IwAR3yd3N1b13GjMKe9ZY5ztVquUIPzdwPo7aUkeWtL6M0gP\\_WAesaf14nZsTU](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1KG2rE1rU-NENxbQsuYN20xnM9TBINn3Z/view?fbclid=IwAR3yd3N1b13GjMKe9ZY5ztVquUIPzdwPo7aUkeWtL6M0gP_WAesaf14nZsTU) Many school districts are beginning to publish guidelines for the coming academic year. This is one of the most thorough. See especially:
  - Links to studies, pages 6-7
  - Environmental Considerations for Music Classes, pages 8-11 (many would apply to choir rehearsal and worship spaces in churches – are we prepared to address these, including hand washing stations, improvements in ventilation, and 36 square feet of space per singer?)
- **Guidelines for Safe Use of Places of Worship in the UK (issued 6/29/20)**  
[https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-from-4-july/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-from-4-july?fbclid=IwAR3SFcCXG2umrZagh835-IsEfoVpgAGC7Qf4awOoJkGC3j\\_sWEIRlfInu0](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-from-4-july/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-from-4-july?fbclid=IwAR3SFcCXG2umrZagh835-IsEfoVpgAGC7Qf4awOoJkGC3j_sWEIRlfInu0) See Item 4, Adapting practices to reduce the spread of infection; Singing, chanting, and the use of musical instruments



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- **Webinar, When Singing Is Silenced: Addressing Anxiety (6/25/20)**  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TLTO8zSFFgg&feature=share&fbclid=IwAR3d9sWc0Zj1\\_XoHnG7KYvigMauzGZMHT5F0gwQDsv-HoCI-qc4wGXWs0ZY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TLTO8zSFFgg&feature=share&fbclid=IwAR3d9sWc0Zj1_XoHnG7KYvigMauzGZMHT5F0gwQDsv-HoCI-qc4wGXWs0ZY)
  - Lifelong Learning at VTS
  - Ellen Johnston, moderator; The Rev. Dr. William Bradley Roberts and David Hoover, panelists
  - Follow up webinar scheduled for 7/1/20
  - “Musicians are facing particular circumstances that increase the stress of Safe Distancing, not experienced by the general public. This is because making music is far more than a vocation or even a passionate avocation. Music brings health to our souls; it expresses the deep longing of our spirits; it carries thoughts and feelings that are beyond words. What then are we to do in this time of separation, when we can’t make music together? These and related matters will form the content of this webinar.”
- **Music Organization Websites:**
  - American Choral Directors Association, <https://acda.org/resources-for-choral-professionals-during-a-pandemic/>
  - American Guild of Organists, <https://www.agohq.org/responding-to-covid-19/>
  - Association of Anglican Musicians, <http://anglicanmusicians.org/covid-19>
- **Bible Studies Related to Sacred Music**
  - Hallelujah: The Bible and Handel’s Messiah, <https://kerygma.com/collections/bible-studies-lent-and-easter/products/hallelujah>
  - Sowing Tears, Reaping Joy: The Bible and Brahms’ Requiem, <https://kerygma.com/collections/bible-studies-lent-and-easter/products/sowing-tears>

### Follow Up Questions in the Chat for Marty Wheeler Burnett

- **Q: Are studies distinguishing between congregational singing and choral singing?**
  - A: No. The study measures the emission of aerosols by singers of all voice classifications who are individually singing the same musical example several times – first without any adaptation, then additional repetitions with modifications such as masks. The example includes vocal “warmups” on different vowels, throughout the singer’s range, followed by one stanza of a hymn. The test example contains the same music for all singers but written in comfortable keys for higher voices (soprano/tenor) and lower voices (alto/bass). So, the results will be applicable for both choral and congregational singing. Samples will be taken in a carefully controlled environmental chamber that can be completely sanitized, and 100% of the air is replaced between study participants.
- **Q: Are you recommending masking for soloists?**
  - A: It is premature to make recommendations until the study results are available. We simply do not have sufficient data to assess the risk involved. We will know more soon! In the meantime, I suggest erring on the side of caution. Safer alternatives could include not having vocal soloists for a few more weeks, using music recorded off-site, or utilizing archival recordings.
- **Q: What about the virus lingering 10 minutes after singing? Is that true?**
  - A: It is my understanding that we need to draw a distinction between droplets and aerosols. (I recommend viewing the interview with Dr. Prather; see the link on my handout). Most of what we read or hear in the media refers to droplets – what we can



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see emitted by a cough or sneeze. These larger particles tend to fall on surfaces, lasting a shorter period of time in the air. Aerosols are smaller, lighter, and invisible to the human eye. They are emitted when speaking, singing, or simply breathing, and they can remain airborne significantly longer. The current studies will provide more accurate information on the amount of time. By measuring the amount of aerosol production in singing and speaking under different conditions, we will obtain accurate data and an answer to your question. This is why we should wait to determine what is safe until we have data from these studies.

### **Episcopal Relief & Development (Katie Mears)**

- Encourage staff and clergy to practice self-care, many are tired from the impact of the pandemic (e.g. Zoom meetings, compassion fatigue, increased exposure to disease, increased need for their help, personal loss or illness, etc.). Try not to fall into the trap of valorizing overwork and skipping sabbath!
- After a disaster, suicide, divorce and substance abuse rates skyrocket. Church leadership are urged to keep an eye out for red flags.

**Next meeting: July 13, 2020**