



# THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF EAST TENNESSEE

*Reconciling All Things in Christ*

The Rt. Rev. Brian L. Cole, *Bishop*  
bcole@dioet.org

November 13, 2020

Dear East Tennessee Friends,

Blessings and peace to you in the name of the Risen Christ.

I am writing to inform you the Diocesan COVID-19 Task Force has developed a Policy for Guidelines for Return to In-Person Service for Clergy and Parish Employees who have tested positive for COVID-19. Their hope is these guidelines will be helpful in offering clear, careful, and compassionate steps for safely returning to church work offices. The new Policy is found at the end of this letter.

I would ask that you continue to follow public health advice of masking, social distancing, frequent hand washing, and staying home as much as you can. With a renewed surge in COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations, and deaths, we all have an important role to play in stopping the spread. Even as there is encouraging news regarding potential vaccines and effective treatments, we have a hard winter ahead.

Do not lose heart. I am proud of all the ways that our parishes and diocesan leaders have responded and worked together this past year in adapting and innovating in order to worship, serve, study, and grow in the faith given to us in Christ Jesus.

All of you remain in my prayers. Pray for me.

Peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ Brian". The signature is written in a cursive style.

The Right Rev. Brian L. Cole

The Episcopal Diocese of East Tennessee  
COVID-19 Task Force

Policy for Guidelines  
for Return to In-Person Service by Clergy and Parish Employees

November 7, 2020

These are times that require reasonable care and prudence going forward. For parish employees or clergy who have tested positive for COVID-19, and before they return to work and service in the parish:

1. They are to isolate themselves for 10 days from the date that the symptoms first appeared.
2. At least 24 hours have passed since their last fever and without the use of fever-reducing medication.
3. It is further required that their symptoms are improving, except the loss of taste and smell, which are separate issues.
4. In cases of mild symptoms, and unless their healthcare provider determines otherwise, a negative retest is not required.
5. For all cases, and particularly, should a case be deemed to be severe by the patient's healthcare provider, the patient should follow the instructions and advice of the healthcare provider, including as to how long the isolation should last, how to measure symptom improvements, and the manner and number of any retesting.
6. These guidelines are premised for the most part upon the CDC guidelines as of 10/30/2020. Going forward, care should be taken to determine if CDC guidelines have been revised.