



Emergency Procedures Commission  
Guidance about Continuing our Ministry during the Pandemic

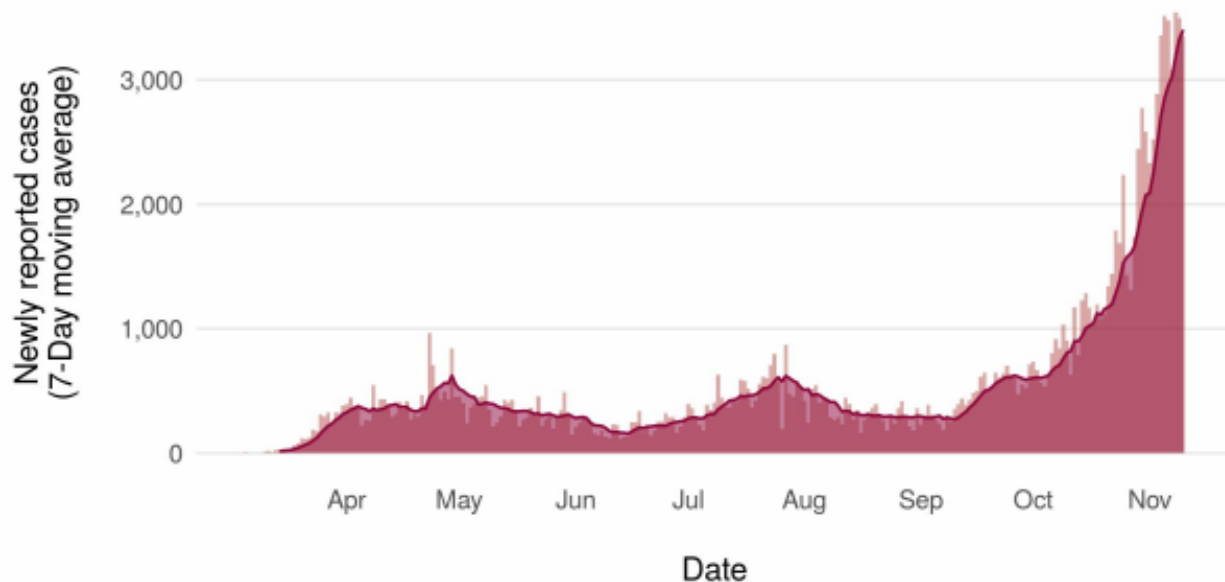
**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The recent, very rapid expansion in coronavirus infections has prompted questions about how our congregations can best maintain health and safety of our congregations and leaders. The Emergency Procedures Commission met on Thursday, November 12<sup>th</sup>, and we were fortunate to have the wisdom of James K. Todd, MD, School of Medicine professor of Pediatric Infectious Diseases and Epidemiology. Commission members in attendance were Rev. Bruce Spear, Kendal Mullins, Rev. Fernando Rodríguez, Rev. Joel Adams, Chris Wineman and Peter Hulac, MD, presbytery vice-moderator. We all describe ourselves as people yearning for the day when we are able once again to worship together.

**COLORADO HEALTH DATA**

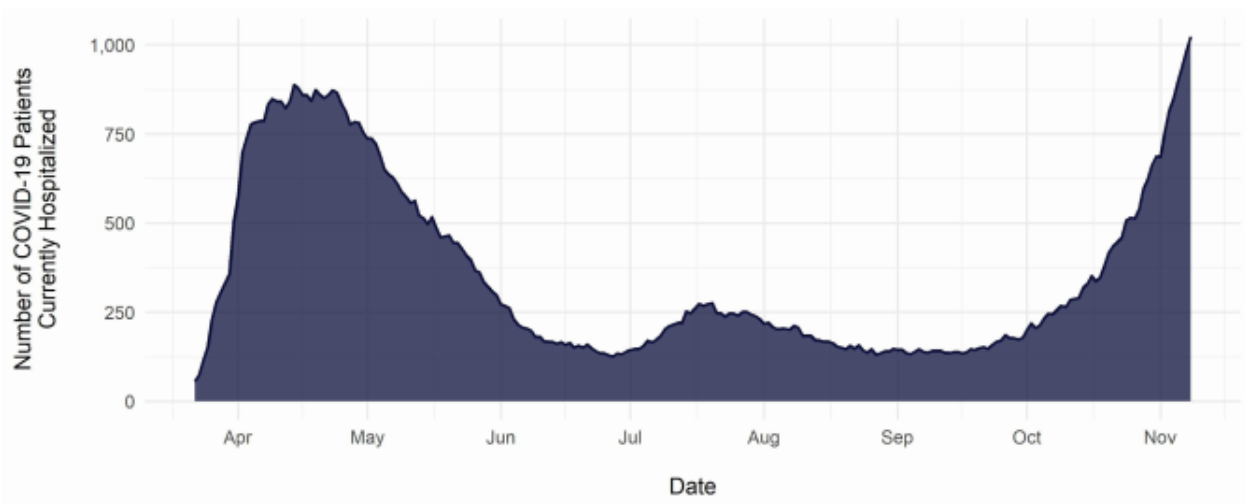
The new statistical information this week shows that the coronavirus is spreading more rapidly than it ever has in Colorado and in other states, and hospitalization rates have also increased at dramatic rates. (See the two graphs below.)

Daily increases in Colorado’s new cases of COVID since the beginning of the pandemic





## Daily COVID hospitalizations



Predictive data demonstrate that Colorado COVID patients will soon be too numerous for our hospitals to manage. Other information shows that the long term effects of coronavirus infections have long term health effects in many patients, even those who did not require ventilator care.

There is some hope on the horizon. It is very possible that vaccines will become available in the near future. It will be much longer, though, for most citizens to receive their doses and then even longer wait for protective immunity in the wider community. The other hopeful sign is that we do have growing information about the value of currently known protective strategies. They include:



**Mask wearing.** The new information this month, in fact, shows that masks not only decrease the chance that a masked, infected person will spread the virus to another; but we now also know that the protective benefit also is present for an uninfected person who wears a mask. **In other words, wearing a mask not only protects others, it protects yourself.** For more information, click here:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/more/masking-science-sars-cov2.html>



**Honoring physical distance.** Keeping a distance of six feet or more from all others except those who live in the same household.



**Avoiding all indoor gatherings unless absolutely necessary.**

Completely avoid crowds which include singing, shouting, and music from wind and brass instruments. Also, limit the time of exposure to the shortest duration possible



**Frequent handwashing.**

**MORE INFORMATION**

- For an array of graphics about particular questions, like the safety of grocery shopping and many more, see <https://covid19.colorado.gov/for-lphas-health-care-providers/communication-resources/social-media-graphics>
- For a video of state epidemiologist, Dr. Rachel Herlihy, see: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cLDBDU0\\_3XE&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cLDBDU0_3XE&feature=youtu.be)

Here is just one of the graphics on the website. It is available in many languages.



**This is how we get back to work #MaskUp**

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### **THE COMMISSION OFFERS THIS GUIDANCE:**

- For decisions about where and how to worship, the commission recognizes that the authority to make these decisions resides with the sessions of local churches.
- At this point, given the current spike in COVID infections, we very strongly discourage indoor worship.
- In terms of outdoor worship, we recommend it only if measures of extreme caution are used. Congregations with large parking lots might be able to arrange in-car worship, using the same level of caution, including a policy that worshipers should remain in their cars.
- We strongly support virtual worship, either live or pre-recorded.
- We recognize and honor the grief caused by both the pandemic and the public health measures. The resulting isolation requires new kinds of pastoral care.
- We encourage members of our churches to plan their family Thanksgiving and Christmas celebrations now, recognizing that for this year we might not be able to enjoy these days as we have in the past or as we hope to in the future.

The members of the commission are available to respond to questions. Please contact Peter Hulac with any questions. [PeterHulac@msn.com](mailto:PeterHulac@msn.com) or (303) 324-1129.