

Weddings during pandemic
The Reverend Richard Munsell

- Risk: Weddings are counterintuitive to social distancing
 - o Safety – contamination issue for couple, clergy, family & friends
 - o Traveling presents potential for contamination from high to low and low to high risk areas
 - o Air travel presents particular contamination issues
 - o Worship area post wedding cleaning presents challenge
- Pastoral thoughts:
 - o Weddings are a public celebration of a commitment that has already been made
 - o Weddings are a sacrament that a couple gives to each other
 - o The primary minister of a marriage are the couple – one to each other
 - o The role of the church is to witness the love of Christ to the couple
- Leadership/Response:
 - o Ban all weddings until post contamination period
 - Very likely will driven by State authorities (Governor/Health Dept)
 - Recommendation: all weddings be delayed until post contamination period
 - No wedding should occur during time of pandemic without the permission/approval of the Bishop: as Chief Liturgist in the Diocese.
 - o Options (lowering potential for contamination):
 - Limit weddings to outside events
 - Limit participation to couple, two witnesses, clergy
 - Allowing for social distancing of 6 feet for minister, couple, and each witness
 - Encourage weddings to be done by Justice of Peace as available
 - o Delay contact until post contamination period
 - Follow up with marriage sacramental counseling
 - Follow up with public celebration of blessed commitment
 - o Encourage pastoral counseling and blessing via electronic means (e.g. Zoom)
- Historical note: Weddings were not initially celebrated in the early ecclesial community
 - o Ref: <https://www.nybooks.com/daily/2012/05/09/marriage-myth/>