***Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast*Notes on 2020 Parochial Report Filings  *Please use in conjunction with Parochial Report instructions***

2020 will indeed be a unique year for determining the numbers to report for membership, attendance, and services. Due to COVID-19, many churches have been closed, partially open, and/or streaming their services online. This will add a little extra effort and flexibility for reporting the 2020 data (and likely 2021 data as well). Do understand that for this reporting year it is reasonable to expect there will need to be some amount of estimation; do your best to report your numbers.

In addition to the usual questions, a few new sections were added specifically to capture how churches worshiped / operated during the pandemic. It now includes a narrative section where you can help communicate your innovations and challenges during 2020. There is also a new section to provide stewardship and financial information unique to 2020 (eg. PPP loans). Your responses to the new sections will provide a picture of how the Episcopal Church conducted worship in 2020 and will help to identify trends in online worship. Hopefully, this will assist in updates to the parochial reports that will be less focused on in-person ASA and more attention provided around church engagement / changing worship services.

A few reminders:

* File your Parochial Report online at <https://reports.dfms.org> using your Login Name (Email Address) and Password.
* Detailed workbook instructions and examples are provided for all sections.
* Do try your best to meet the canonical deadlines. **The church deadline is March 1**; your reports are to be completed online and submitted to the diocese by that date. **The diocesan deadline is May 1**; all our church reports must be reviewed, approved, and sent to the General Convention Office by the diocese by this date.
* Again, please use your good judgment when tackling questions that may not seem to fit your congregation. When in doubt, don’t hesitate to contact the diocesan office.

A few of the reporting recommendations and changes are noted below and **highlighted in blue.**

**Membership / Communicants:**

For statistical purposes the Episcopal Church usually counts only active baptized members (Box 1 & 2). In a normal year, a person is usually added to the Register of Church Membership and Rites (Parish Register) due to baptisms, letter of transfer, and confirmation and reception, or if a member is restored to active service. This is reported in Box 1. Declines in membership is usually due to death or if one transferred out, or if one is removed from active status. This is reported in Box 2. This year, however, the data may be a little difficult to pin down as new or transferred members may now be online and not officially reported.

Communicants in Good Standing are those communicants, “who for the previous year have been faithful in corporate worship, unless for good cause prevented, and have been faithful in working, praying and giving for the spread of the Kingdom of God.” This is reported in Box 5. This year:

* **Due to the COVID-19 pandemic many churches closed in March of 2020 and were not able to offer Holy Communion services for much of the year, a member who has been faithful in worship, working, praying and giving may still be considered in good standing even if they were not able to receive communion three times in 2020. The pandemic is the “good cause” that prevented them from being able to fulfill their obligations.**

**Attendance:**

Average Sunday Attendance (ASA) will be reported a bit different than usual. ASA is usually determined by adding up the total number of persons (children and adults) who attended all public Sunday services and then divide by number of services (reported in Box 7). Today, some services are now conducted just online via Zoom, Facebook Live, or YouTube where counting “views”, “clicks” or “unique views” could be a difficult endeavor. As such, The General Convention recommends the following:

* **Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, congregations are asked to calculate ASA for 2020 from January 1 to March 1. This means that almost all congregations will divide by 9 (number of Sunday Jan 1 – Mar 1) unless weather or other disaster prevented services from being held on a Sunday in January or February of 2020.**
* **Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, Line 9, Easter Attendance has been removed only for the filing year of 2020. When filing online you will see your 2019 total for Easter, but will not be able to enter a figure for 2020.**

**Services:**

This section will also require somewhat different reporting for 2020. This year GC is requesting you break-out “in person” and “on-line” services separately the best you can.

* **Please note that lines 10 through 16 ask you to report in-person and online services separately.**
	+ **a. If an in-person liturgy with a congregation in the same physical space was also streamed, please count that as an in-person service.**
	+ **b. An “Online” Eucharist would be one where only the worship leaders were gathered in the same physical space and the whole congregation joined online. Here are some examples in case that is helpful:**
		- **i. Two worship leaders and a congregation of three is in person worship.**
		- **ii. Ten worship leaders, but no one sitting in the pews or present only as a congregant is online worship**

**Other Sections:**

* **Lines 22 through 24, Education: Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, Line 22, Total number enrolled in Church School has been removed only for the filing year of 2020. When filing online you will see your 2019 total for enrollment but will not be able to enter a figure for 2020.**

**New: 2020 WORSHIP DURING THE PANDEMIC**

The purpose of this new section is to capture how your congregation conducted worship during the pandemic. You do not need to provide any attendance information. Your responses will provide a picture of how the Episcopal Church conducted worship in 2020 and will help to identify trends in online worship. The data collected in this section will assist the church in developing standards for tracking online and hybrid worship (in-person worship that is streamed online) in future revisions of the parochial report.

**New: RACIAL JUSTICE AND RECONCILIATION**

New for 2020, this section will allow you to provide information on the level of commitment to this work at a congregational level towards racial justice and reconciliation. Please give an honest assessment in answering these questions.

**STEWARDSHIP AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION**

Most of this section has not changed from the previous years. However, there may be a few items that may stand out. Expect that your “plate” giving will be down substantially in 2020. In addition, Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loans were granted to a number of churches, which may or may not have been forgiven in 2020 yet.

* Line 5. Other Operating Income, including unrestricted gifts and restricted gifts used for operations, and contributions from congregation’s organizations.
	+ G. Include surplus operating revenues from cemeteries, schools, real estate, special grants from non-church sources **[if your PPP loan has been converted to a grant, include it here on line 5 and in line 22 which is on the next page, ‘Continuing Stewardship and Financial Information of the Reporting Congregation’],** principal of all undesignated gifts, and memorials that were used for operating expenses or for the Diocesan and General Church Program. Include also support of the operating budget by congregation’s organizations and foundations.

**New: CONTINUING STEWARDSHIP AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION**In order to understand the financial impact of the pandemic on congregations, this section asks question regarding Paycheck Protection Program loans and additional expenses incurred. Please answer by selecting from the options provided. Please include a PPP loan whether or not it has been converted to a grant in Line 22.

**New: SPECIAL EDITION 2020 NARRATIVES**Narrative Questions. In order to help congregations, dioceses, and the whole Church tell the story of our response to the COVID-19 pandemic, congregations are asked to provide narratives reflecting on the opportunities and challenges of this time, how the congregation has responded and is looking ahead. Please collaborate with congregational leadership in writing these narratives.