



## REGION 1 HAMMER & DANCE

May 20, 2020

United for Ministry in the Days of COVID-19.

The Social Service Agencies  
and Synods of Region 1.

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**F**or us as a church, and a nation, the dance has now begun in earnest. States are reopening businesses.

Churches are re-engaging corporate worship. Individuals are getting antsy and sloppy with social distancing. None of this is necessarily bad. It is, however, important to remember there is a *significant lag time between action and reaction* with COVID-19. What we will see in the next few weeks will not reflect our reopening of the economy. It will reflect that last of the lockdown.

In addition, at first blush it appears that people may not be flocking back to either stores or churches just because they can. There seems to be a wise prudence evident in the behavior of many, just as there is some degree of recklessness in the choices of a few. This further complicates our ability to understand what is really going on.

This issue of the "Hammer and Dance" asks this very question, **"How will we know what's really going on?"**



### Not so fast?

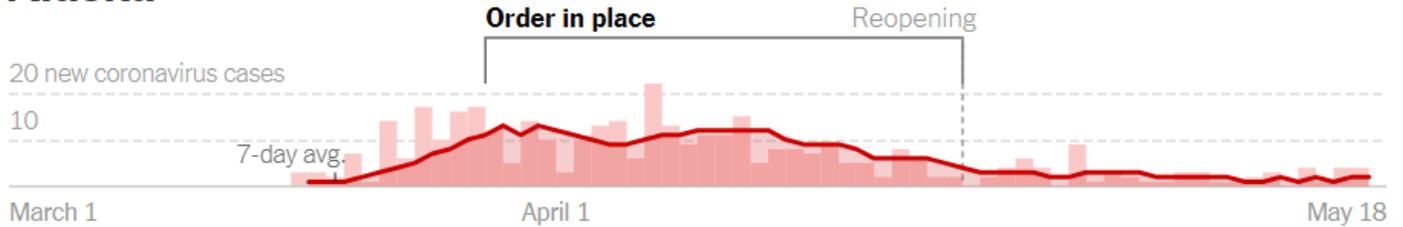
**The chute has successfully slowed my descent. I guess I don't need it anymore!**

Because it takes from 1 to 3 weeks for the coronavirus to express itself after contamination, our data is always 2 to 3 weeks old. "With more parts of the U.S. starting to reopen, many people will be tempted to look at the data this week and begin to proclaim victory. But this week's data will reflect late April and early May when much of the country was still on lockdown."

[How Virus Data Can Mislead](#)

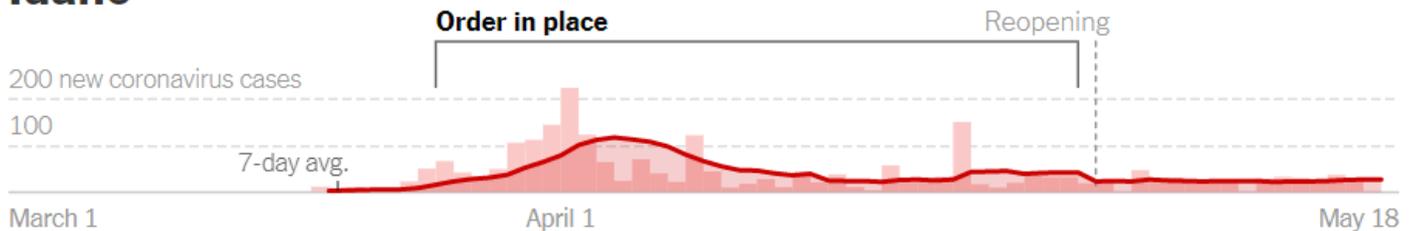
# What we see around us:

## Alaska



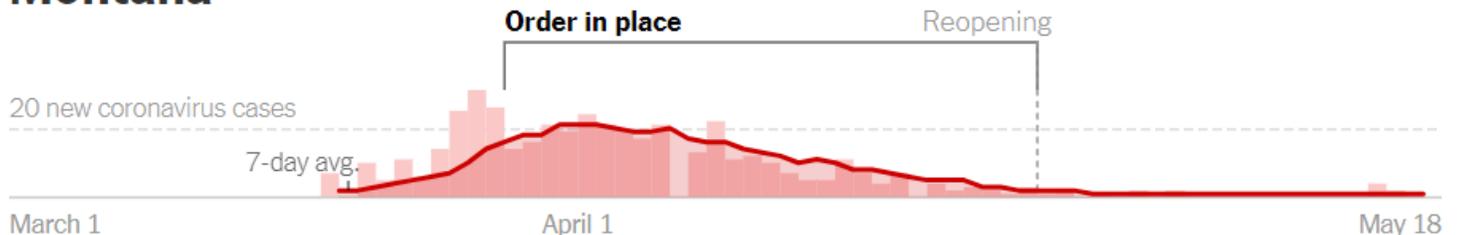
Alaska encourages all participants at social or religious gatherings to wear face coverings and stay 6 feet apart from people they don't live with. If people are singing or otherwise projecting their voice, the minimum distance is 10 feet. Bp. Wickstrom has released ["On the Possibility of Gathering for Worship While in a Pandemic"](#) for congregations.

## Idaho



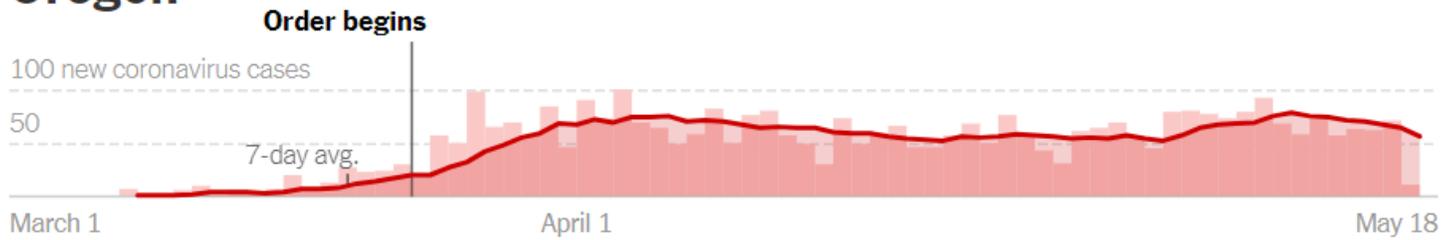
Idaho allowed places of worship to open as of May 1, encouraging them to publish guidelines for their memberships, but not requiring any State approval. Bp. Kuempel has [released the following communication](#) for congregations in both Idaho and Washington.

## Montana



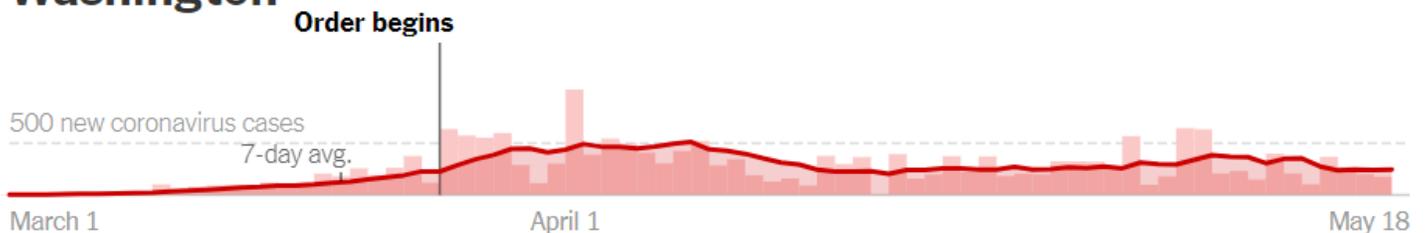
Montana allowed worship to resume April 26 in a manner consistent with social distancing between people who are not members of the same household. No State approval or oversight is required. Bp. Jungling has released the following [pastoral guide for reopening of congregations](#).

## Oregon



Oregon released a phased reopening plan to being for qualifying counties May 15. Worship gatherings of less than 25 people were envisioned as part of Phase 1. [A County legal decision rendered May 18](#) found all State gathering and distancing restrictions to be unconstitutional, effectively leaving Oregon without a plan. Later the same day the Oregon Supreme Court stayed that ruling pending further consideration, so phased reopening is currently still in place. Prior to these actions Bp. Larson Caesar had [released the following guidelines](#).

## Washington



Washington is in Phase 1 of a four-phase reopening plan. No social gatherings of any size are allowed in Phase 1. Phase 2 will allow for gatherings of up to 5 people and Phase 3 gatherings of up to 50 people. Bp. Wee of the NWWA Synod has [published the following for congregations](#). Bp. Jaech of the SWWA Synod has published the following [“Recommendations for the Coming Weeks”](#).

### How will we know? Watch for the right things!

To date ‘stay at home’ orders have sought to keep people away from the virus. Testing, tracking and tracing are different. The goal here is to keep the virus away from people. (When the bulls run in Barcelona you stay off the streets. As the bulls get corralled they are no less dangerous, but you get to go out again – just watch for strays!) **Personal accountability and care** by worshipping communities is key as they re-engage corporate worship within this changing social framework.

# Happy Birthday Mount St. Helens!

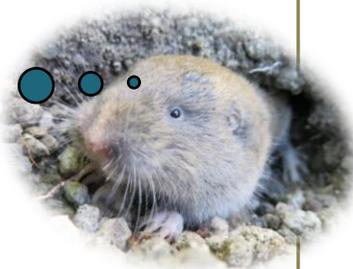
Forty years ago this past Monday, May 18, 1980, Mount St. Helens erupted. As with COVID the onslaught was immediate and devastating. Scientists didn't think the mountain would recover for 100 years. They were wrong.



***“Don't say the mountain is recovering — because it will never return to what it was before. Rather, it is busily making something entirely new.”*** *Charlie Crisafulli*



“How will we know what's really going on?”  
Maybe we don't have to.



The northern pocket gopher survived the eruption in numerous locations throughout the Mount St. Helens blast area. It has expanded greatly throughout the post-eruption landscape and in doing so has facilitated the establishment of plants through its mound-building activities.

May 18, 1980

“Fred Swanson was a geologist with the Forest Service when he hopped aboard the helicopter that day. Now a professor emeritus of forestry at Oregon State University, he remembers the shock when he first sat down [on Johnston Ridge](#) and dug a small pit in the volcanic deposit. Amid the grains of volcanic material, tiny fungal threads were already burgeoning. Above ground, ballooning spiders rained in from all directions. What was unfolding all around him, Swanson said, was a story of winners and losers. Losers were anything present and big on the landscape at the time of the blast. Six-hundred-year-old Douglas fir were snapped and seared. Elk were incinerated. But for survivors snug in the soil, such as ants and pocket gophers ... these survivors — the living memory of what was there before the blast — these biological legacies immediately shaped what would come after it.”

[Mt. St. Helens Mysteries](#)  
[The Seattle Times](#)