



Protocols for Liturgical and Sacramental Gatherings

Revised March 8, 2021

With the help of health officials, the Archdiocese has put together a detailed protocol for public Mass. With more people able to attend, these Masses look more open to the public, but there are still restrictions. Our fellow worshippers may behave differently but our purpose is still to draw one another into deeper discipleship with Jesus Christ—and where better can we do that than at the Mass?

Basic Parameters for Mass

- *Please understand that no one is required to attend Mass if they are not comfortable or if it is unsafe for them to do so.*
 - The obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation continues to be dispensed for all Catholics.
 - If you have tested positive for COVID-19, have symptoms of COVID-19, or are caring for or living with sick persons, please stay home until your health care provider says it is safe to be around other people.
 - The Archdiocese also advises that parishioners over 65 years of age and those with preexisting health conditions remain at home and make a Spiritual Communion, however, you will not be turned away.
- For those who cannot attend Mass in person, we will continue to livestream one weekend Mass (Saturday at 4:00pm) as well as our two weekday 7:30am Masses (on Tuesday and Wednesday), on our parish website homepage, churchofstalbert.org and on our Facebook page, facebook.com/stalbertmn.

Health and Safety of Parishioners

- Our first consideration is the health and well-being of our parishioners, especially the most vulnerable: the elderly and those with chronic illnesses. We will continue to rely on medical professionals and standards to inform our protocols and practices.
- Please practice basic healthy hygiene:
 - Wash or sanitize your hands when you arrive at the church and as needed while there.
 - Cover coughs and sneezes with the crook of your arm.
 - Whenever possible, use your bathroom at home rather than the public restroom at the church or the Parish Center when overflow seating is needed for weekend Masses.
 - If it is necessary to use the restroom while at the church or the Parish Center (for weekend overflow), please limit the number of people in the restroom to one (unless with child), keeping in mind the six feet for social distancing when waiting in line and when walking in and out of the restroom.
 - At the church and the Parish Center the line begins six feet away from the door and is marked accordingly.

- The Archdiocese has directed us to celebrate Masses with congregations of no more than 50% of our seating capacity, however due to the six feet social distancing, our capacity is limited to 132 people into the church for any one Mass.
 - Given the fact that not everyone will return to Mass at this time, attendance should not pose a problem for most Masses.
 - Attendees will be directed to the Parish Center for overflow seating when we have reached our capacity in the church. Holy Communion will be distributed at the Parish Center. The estimated limited seating capacity at the Parish Center is 90.
 - We will be monitoring attendance on-site to ensure safe social distancing. Please cooperate with our ushers' requests so that we can maximize our seating.
 - St. Albert's parishioners are asked to attend Mass at St. Albert and St. Michael parishioners have been asked to attend Mass at St. Michael due to limited seating capacity at both parishes. Our 4:00pm and 9:00am are similar in time so we are asking that parishioners go to their parish at this time so that we can maximize seating for our parishioners.
- To ensure six feet of social distancing between individuals and households, seating is limited to every other pew (which positions people six feet apart), and limit the number of people per open pew to ensure at least six feet of space between individuals of different households. Please only sit in the pews that are NOT taped off and we ask that the tape not be removed. We will also have ushers and greeters on hand to direct people where to sit and to help maintain social distancing.
- Face masks and gloves are available for Ushers, Greeters, and EMHC's to wear while participating in their ministry.
- The Archbishop has asked that the faithful wear masks. Facemasks are required for all assembly members (except those under age two and those with health issues that prevent them from wearing a mask). Please respect the choices of those around you in this regard and do not judge those who wear masks or those who do not.
- For those parishioners who did not bring a facemask with them, facemasks are available in the narthex.
- The crying room is open but limited to one family or household at a time due to the small space.

Cleaning and Disinfecting the Church and Parish Center Before and After Liturgies

- Weather permitting, the two sets of front doors at the church and the Parish Center (for weekend overflow) will be propped open.
 - If weather does not allow for the church doors or Parish Center doors to be open, our greeters will hold the doors open so attendees will not have to touch the doors to enter.
 - Additionally, the inside doors to the church and Parish Center will be propped open. You may enter any one of the doors that is open.
 - When you leave the church, we ask that you exit only through the side doors that are propped open to maintain traffic flow and social distancing.
 - Please only enter and exit through the open doors.
- Weather permitting, the exterior doors of the church will remain open to circulate fresh air throughout the building during Mass.
- Hand sanitizer is available in the entryway; however, if you are able to bring your own with you, please do, it will help our supply last!
- All high-use areas will be disinfected after each liturgy, including pews, the ambo, handrails, door handles, and push plates as well as the chairs at the Parish Center when they are used.
- We will sanitize restrooms after each liturgy.
- We will thoroughly clean before Masses if the church has been used since the last disinfecting.
- Hymnals and all other materials are removed from all pews, and all Holy Water fonts remain covered/empty. An automatic Holy Water dispenser is available at the main entrance of the church.

- Copies of a worship aid are available at each liturgy. We ask that you pick one up when you enter and discard it in the box provided for recycling on your way out.
- Bulletins are available near the entrance. You may pick one up to take home with you at your own discretion.
- Clergy will purify vessels after distribution of Communion is completed.
- Sacristans will wash the vessels with hot, soapy water.
- Servers should leave the cassock and alb they used on the coat rack in the hallway until it is safe to be used again.
- Sacred Arts and Environment have been asked to keep decorations to a minimum.

Participation in the Mass

- The Archdiocese continues to recommend against congregational singing at the present time so we ask that the congregation does not sing along with the music ministry. Singing expels more respiratory particles than speaking. All are invited to join silently and prayerfully to the psalms and hymns the music ministry provides.
- The procession will consist of the altar servers, reader, the deacon (if present) and priest, maintaining six feet between each person for social distancing.
- The ushers will take up the collection using the long handled collection baskets maintaining six feet for social distancing.
- Donations can also be mailed or dropped off at the parish office.
- The Opening Greeting and Sign of Peace remain suspended, and please do not hold hands during the Our Father prayer.

Distributing and Receiving Holy Communion

- Distributors over age 65 know of their risks and are schedule per their request.
- Only the priest will drink out of one chalice, as required for the validity of the Mass. Distribution of the Precious Blood to the faithful will continue to be suspended.
- After the Clergy and EMHC's receive Holy Communion, they will walk to the credence table to put on their face mask, cleanse their hands, and return to the altar to receive the ciborium before going to their station to distribute Holy Communion.
- The faithful are strongly recommended to receive Holy Communion in the hand. However, reception on the tongue will not be forbidden. Explanation is below.
- Please maintain six feet of social distancing as you proceed from your pew to receive Holy Communion, especially between members of different households. Be especially mindful of children, who are often less aware of keeping their distance.
- There will be 2 ministers of Holy Communion in the church for those attending Mass in the church and 1 minister for the Parish Center when open for overflow seating (weekend Masses only).
 - If a minister has touched the hand or mouth of a communicant, immediately after distributing to that communicant, the minister will re-sanitize his or her hands before distribution to the next communicant.
 - When receiving Holy Communion, be sure to extend your hand forward as far as you can to maintain a safe distance between you and the minister of Holy Communion.
 - If you are wearing a mask, once the minister holds up the host and says, "The Body of Christ," say "Amen," receive in one hand, step off to the side, pull down your mask with the other hand and receive the Lord.
 - If you are wearing gloves, you will be asked to remove your gloves to receive in the hand.
 - If you are accustomed to receiving Holy Communion on the tongue, please consider receiving reverently in the hand or be last in line to receive. If you notice a distributor touched your tongue or lip, please tell them so that they can sanitize their hands.

- For those who are in the church, two ministers of Holy Communion will be stationed at the sanctuary steps. The smaller sections of pews are to receive first. The communicants will receive and then walk along the stain glass window aisle to return to their same pew. The larger sections of pews will receive next. The communicants will receive and then walk down the center aisle to return to their same pew. Please maintain six feet for social distancing between anyone not in your household.
- If the Parish Center is used for overflow, a minister of Holy Communion will arrive to distribute Holy Communion to those who are there. Communion will be distributed one row at a time. Maintain six feet of social distancing.
- Ministers return all remaining hosts to the altar where the priest will gather them without contact. Ministers should immediately purify fingers with water in the bowl as usual. Sanitize them afterwards with sanitizer or soap and hot water in either the sacristy or restroom.
- No gloves, tongs, receptacles or other instruments will be used. Communion hosts may not be distributed in baggies, cups or other pre-packaged containers.
- Once you have received Holy Communion, you are asked to return to your pew for prayer and continuation of Mass.
 - Distribution of Holy Communion in this way should allow for social distancing.
- For those who are livestreaming and want to receive Holy Communion, they are asked to receive at the Parish Center.
- At the conclusion of Mass, please do not remain in the entryways or narthex area but move directly outside. Even when outside, continue to maintain at least six feet between members of different households.

Adoration and Other Sacraments

- Adoration has been moved back to the adoration chapel with a capacity of 3 people at one time, allowing for six feet social distancing. An air purifier has been provided to continuously cleanse the air.
- Reconciliation has been moved back to the confessional area. The kneeler and chairs have been moved to allow for six feet social distancing, and an air purifier has been added to continuously cleanse the air.
- We will communicate with those families waiting to receive the Sacraments of Baptism, First Reconciliation, First Holy Communion, Confirmation, Matrimony, and Funerals directly to share additional details and parameters.

Revisions and Future Information

- As we continue celebrating the Mass publicly and the coronavirus situation continues to evolve, our practices may change. Please be patient and flexible, and watch our bulletin and website for details.
- If you have questions or concerns, please call the Parish Office at 763-497-2474.

An inherent risk of exposure to COVID-19 exists anywhere people are present. COVID-19 is an extremely contagious disease that can lead to severe illness and death. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, senior citizens and people with underlying medical conditions are especially vulnerable to COVID-19. The Church of St. Albert has undertaken precautionary cleaning, disinfecting, and implemented social distancing guidelines to help reduce the risk of exposure. However, the Church of St. Albert cannot guarantee that visitors are 100% safe from exposure to COVID-19. Therefore, the Church of St. Albert recommends that people over 65 or with underlying health conditions not attend Mass at this time and continue to worship online. Attendance at liturgies is at your own risk.