



Preparing for a Joyful Celebration of the Nativity of the Lord at Christmas

While pandemic restrictions will make our celebrations of Christmas this year different, we are determined to make them as joyful and engaging as possible for those who worship with us. We are offering both virtual and in-person options in an effort to accommodate various needs, guidelines, and comfort levels.

Regarding **virtual options**, we are creating an enhanced celebration of the Mass that we will record and make available over the internet for viewing at any time starting on December 24th. We also are creating a **Watch Kit** that we will make available ahead of time to aid our at-

home participation in this virtual celebration, as well as supply us with various ways to expand our celebration beyond Christmas day. This packet of materials will include a worship aid with all the songs so that we can sing along, various items like bells to ring at the Gloria, prayers and blessings tied to various feasts in the Christmas season, as well as crafts and activities for the young and young at heart. **Also, we plan to livestream all of our Christmas Masses**, so that we will be able to watch Mass celebrated in whichever of our three churches we may prefer. These virtual options may become key if further restrictions limit the capacity or possibility of in-person celebrations.

With regard to **in-person Masses**, we assume that we will face the same restrictions and requirements for public Masses that have faced since re-opening. Our capacity will be limited by the need to maintain a minimum of six-feet of separation between households. We will continue doing everything that we are doing to keep us safe at our weekend Masses: requiring face masks/face coverings; checking people in; sanitizing hands; directing people to their seat; ushering people to communion and to the exits; and disinfecting the pews and all touched surfaces after each use. Holy Communion will be distributed in the hand by the clergy. And singing will be limited to the cantor only – no choir and no congregational singing.

We will maintain a similar schedule of in-person Masses as in years past: on Christmas Eve - 3:30pm at Blessed Sacrament, 4:00pm at St. Mary's, 5:00pm at St. Boniface, and 10:00pm at Blessed Sacrament; and on Christmas Day - 9:00am at St. Boniface and 10:30am at St. Mary's. Given our limited seating capacity, we will be using a lottery system to allocate seats. Everyone is invited to complete and submit the **Seat Request Form** (on the opposite side of this form and available on our parish website) to attend any of the six in-person Masses by the end of the day on **Friday, December 4, 2020**. If you are willing to come at anyone of several Mass times, then please indicate an order of preference in the space provided on the form. That way, if your request is selected in the lottery, but your first choice is full, we may be able to accommodate your second, third or subsequent choice.

The deadline for submitting requests gives us ample time to run the lottery and inform those who have been selected that they have a seat well ahead of time (hopefully by Friday, December 11). As we draw requests, we will assign seats on a map of the church pews until we have filled all the available seats. This will allow us to maximize seating capacity. We plan to use a system of "tickets" to ease the check in and seating process. Providing a list of the first and last names of those for whom you are requesting a seat gives us an accurate list for contact tracing purposes and helps us avoid duplication should different members of a household unknowingly submit multiple requests. If someone comes to Mass not having a "ticket," then essentially it will be like flying stand-by. We would offer that person whatever seat might be available, if a "ticketed" person fails to check in by ten minutes before the scheduled start of Mass.

Now that you know something of our plans, we ask you to consider how you, the members of your household and anyone who is joining you might participate in our parish's celebration of the Nativity of the Lord at Christmas. And we look forward to joining with you in the love, peace and joy of the season.