

New Guidelines for COVID-19

Mass Guidelines at a Glance

St. Peter Catholic Church is pleased, but cautious, in announcing that public Masses will resume as of May 27, 2020. We are reminded that the danger of the Coronavirus is not over, but we are encouraged that with proper precautions, it can be safe to resume offering Mass in our church.

Bishop Bradley has issued "Guidelines for the Faithful for Public Celebrations of the Holy Mass." The official text of the Diocesan guidelines is included below these initial points, which show how St. Peter's will implement the bishop's directives.

Obligation is Suspended: The legal obligation to attend Mass is suspended until September. **You are not obligated to attend Mass on Sunday.** If you feel the slightest bit ill, or feel that you are generally at risk, do not attend Mass at this time.

Live Stream Masses: Each weekend Mass at St. Peter's will be live-streamed to the parish Facebook page. The 8:00 Mass will be "posted" to the page so that it will be available for viewing at any time.

Mask Required: Everyone attending Mass and all ministers except the priest at the altar must wear a mask covering the nose and mouth at all times except during the reception of Holy Communion. The lector, when proclaiming the word, will not wear a mask, nor will the two musicians while singing, since they will be more than six feet apart and away from the assembly.

If you cannot tolerate a mask, or are exempt because of asthma or another condition, that will serve as an indication that you should not attend Mass just yet. The mask requirement is not negotiable and there can be no exceptions.

Social Distancing: Maintain 6 feet between you and any other person, except someone in your own household. This applies outside, during entry and exit, and in your pew. Observe markings and signs on the floor and in pews.

Hands: Please wash your hands before leaving home and use hand sanitizer as you enter the church.

Singing: Singing while wearing a mask is impractical. The assembly should not sing or attempt to sing full-voice during the Mass, but you are welcome to sing or hum quietly. Hymnals and all other materials have been removed from the pews.

Collection: Please place your offering in the clearly marked box in the vestibule as you enter or leave.

Receiving Holy Communion: Follow ushers' direction. As you approach the minister, stop at the line, respond "Amen" to the minister's presentation of the Body of Christ, THEN lower your mask, receive the host, consume it immediately, reposition your mask, and return to your seat.

Receiving in the hand or on the tongue: Receiving the host in the hand is recommended but receiving on the tongue is permitted. If you are wearing gloves (not required), you must remove the gloves before receiving in the hand. The minister may not place the host into a gloved hand.

Sanitizing procedures, Communion ministers: The ministers of Holy Communion, whether clergy or lay, will wear a mask during distribution and will sanitize their hands prior to distribution. If a minister's hand comes into contact with a communicant's hand, tongue, or lips, the minister will put down the ciborium and sanitize his/her hands before continuing. A small table will be at each station to facilitate this process.

Bulletin and extra envelopes: The bulletin and extra envelopes will be in the vestibule for you to pick up. No one will hand the bulletin to you.

Holy Water: Holy water is not provided at the church entrances, nor is the supply canister available on the weekends. You may fill your own container with Holy Water during the week, or you may take a small bottle that is provided.

Entry and Exit: Please enter via the main doors. The side door will be for exit only. When leaving, the ushers will dismiss by row. Please use the main doors for exit, unless you are seated near the side door; then you may choose either exit. Do not walk "against traffic" to get to the exit.

Capacity: The capacity of our church is limited to 25% of its official rating. This is about 95 persons. Attendance at each Mass will be limited to 95 persons. This is not negotiable, and there can be no exceptions.

Overflow: The Parish hall will be set up for overflow seating with the live-stream of the Mass on a screen. A Communion minister will come to the Parish Hall to distribute Holy Communion to those who are seated there.

Holy Communion for Those Who Cannot Attend Mass: If you cannot attend Mass due to uncertain health or intolerance of the mask, you may receive Holy Communion during the 1/2 hour following each weekend Mass. Simply wait outside the church, maintain proper distancing, and an usher will invite you in when everyone has left from Mass. A Communion minister will be on hand to offer you the Body of Christ.

Warning about risks: While our parish is taking precautions consistent with the advice of public health authorities and the Diocese of Kalamazoo, there is no way to completely eliminate the possibility of COVID-19 infection. By gathering in any public place including the church, you assume the risk of contracting the COVID-19 virus. Let us hold each other in prayer, and be ever-vigilant about reducing this risk.