

COVID-19 UPDATES

REVISED JUNE 29, 2021

Updates and Protocol based on Diocesan, State and County directives:

1. **Wearing of masks:** The fully vaccinated may attend Mass and all gatherings on parish property without wearing a mask. **On May 26, 2021, the diocese announced one adaption: *Clergy and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are to wear masks while distributing Communion.***
2. In each of our Churches there is an area designated for those who are not fully vaccinated or who may feel more comfortable seated around others wearing a mask. This designated area is to the left,* rear of the Church.
3. **Social distancing:** Social distancing will only be maintained in the area for those wearing masks. This area can be expanded as needed. **If you chose to sit in this area, you must wear a mask.**
4. **Liturgical changes:**
 - We have resumed the use of Holy Water.
 - The offertory procession will resume.
 - The collection basket can resume being circulated throughout the pews.
 - The sign of peace is not yet able to be reinstated into the Mass.
 - The reception of the Precious Blood of Christ from the chalice, is not yet to be reinstated in the Mass.
 - There is no limit to the number of liturgical ministers serving during a Mass.
 - Worship aids do not need to be thrown out after every Mass. They can be reused throughout the weekend and will be recycled after the last Mass on Sunday. Please continue to place your worship aid in the designated bins at each exit, so that we can redistribute for the other Masses.
 - Sanitizing hands is not required upon entering the Church however, we do ask that you continue with this practice at this time.
 - Entrance/Exit signs have been removed at all four Churches.
5. **Other updates:**
 - **The dispensation for the obligation to attend Mass:** remains in effect until further notice.
 - **The use of Confessionals:** Confessionals will not be used at this time. We will continue to use alternative spaces for confessions, due to space constrictions and ventilation challenges.
 - **Communion to the Homebound:** Clergy and extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion are permitted to bring the Holy Eucharist to the homebound, following current diocesan guidelines. Contact Karen Michaux (412-207-1655) if you would like to resume serving in this ministry, or if you are interested in serving as an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion to the homebound.
 - **Faith Formation:** Faith Formation and religious education programs will operate in alignment with COVID protocols followed in our Catholic schools.

- **Parish-sponsored gatherings:** Gatherings may include the serving of food and on-site consumption of meals. This means that parish festival dinners, for example, may be held indoors, again, as long as local food handling protocols are followed. Parish festivals may take place.
 - **Non-parish sponsored activities:** Non-parish sponsored activities and groups are permitted as long as the group follows current covid-19 protocol of facility.
 - **Cleaning and sanitizing of churches:** The CDC has adjusted its directive to say cleaning (not disinfecting) once a day is usually enough to remove what may be on surfaces and help maintain a healthy facility. **
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Some Questions raised regarding new updates and protocol:

- **If someone is wearing a mask, are they required to sit in this designated mask wearing section?** **No**, anyone wearing a mask is free to sit anywhere in the Church.
- **If someone is NOT wearing a mask, can they sit in the designated mask wearing section?** **No**, because this area needs to be maintained for those who may feel more comfortable seated only around others who are wearing a mask. Some people are not yet comfortable being in close proximity to others not wearing a mask.
- **If someone is wearing a mask, does this mean they are not vaccinated?** **No**, in fact many people who are fully vaccinated, have decided to continue to wear a mask in public at this time.
- **Is social distancing still maintained throughout the Church?** As of May 31, 2021, social distancing is only maintained in the area of the Church designated for mask wearing. If you choose to sit in this area, you must wear a mask.
- **How do you know if someone NOT wearing a mask is fully vaccinated?** The CDC, State of Pennsylvania and Allegheny County directives have not identified needing to verify if someone is vaccinated. It is the “honor system” and the assumption is that those who have not been vaccinated are following the State directives.

* This is to the left when you walk into the main entrance of each Church. This area is easiest to access upon entering the Church and most visible for ushers to point out to guests.

** Therefore, you may shift to once per day cleanings unless, according to the CDC, there is a high transmission of COVID-19 in your community. If there has been a sick person or someone who tested positive for COVID-19 in your facility within the last 24 hours, you should still clean AND disinfect the space.

Thank you for your patience as we adjust to these changes and invite more people back to worship together. If you have questions, please call the parish office at 412-755-2046.