

St. Bernard Church Reopens for Weekend Liturgies on June 27

Mass will be celebrated in our church once again! In compliance with the Diocese of Metuchen and state authorities, June 27 will mark our return to weekend liturgies with the congregation. This is a time to slowly emerge from our isolation, to renew our spiritual life, and to worship as a family.

We remain deeply committed to protecting your health and will re-open our doors under strict protocols that will be loosened only as the Diocese and public health officials allow. These protocols may change as we learn and move forward, so we ask for your continued patience as we adapt to the next phase of re-engaging in a full parish life.

Weekend Mass Schedule [until further notice]

Saturday Vigil: 5:15 p.m. *(live-streamed and posted on the parish website for later viewing)*

Sunday: 8 a.m., 10 a.m., 12 p.m. *(all will be live-streamed)*

Weekday Mass Schedule

June: Daily Mass will resume at 8 a.m. and 12:10 p.m. *(only the 8 a.m. will be live-streamed and posted)*

July & August: 8 a.m. *(live-streamed and posted)*

Bishop Checchio has dispensed the weekly obligation to physically attend Mass until further notice, so *those who are sick should stay home and participate in our live-streamed Mass instead. Those who are vulnerable or concerned should consider attending one of the typically less crowded weekday Masses.*

Will parking lot Masses continue?

- No, the last parking lot Mass was held on June 21.

Are reservations needed? What if there are too many people?

- No reservations needed, but please arrive early for an orderly and well-distanced entrance into the church.
- If we reach church capacity or if you simply prefer, Mass will be live-streamed to the cafeteria and Holy Communion will be brought to you there.

What precautions will be taken?

- The church and cafeteria will be disinfected before each liturgy, including the bathrooms.
- Attendance is limited to no more than 25% building capacity but not exceeding 100.
- Everyone MUST WEAR FACE COVERINGS throughout the liturgy, except for the very young at the discretion of the parents. See below for additional instructions re face coverings during Communion.
- Hand sanitizer stations will be placed at every entrance.
- Families / households may sit together but must sit at least 6 feet apart from other individuals, and pews will be cordoned off or identified for “individuals,” “couples,” or “families.” Ushers will show you where to sit. *Please move to the center of each pew*, reserving aisle seats for those being seated after you; this will allow us to maintain 6 feet of social distancing.
- The cry room is closed until further notice, so some families may prefer to be seated in the cafeteria.
- Hymnals, missalettes, and other items will be removed.
- Songs will be limited to a small selection that will be available for you to print prior to coming to church.

- Collection baskets will not be circulated. Instead, collection boxes will be placed in open pews throughout the church for visitors and those who continue to use envelopes.
- The Sign of Peace and offertory procession will be suspended. See below for changes in receiving the Holy Eucharist.

What should I bring with me / my family?

- Face coverings are mandatory. Please wear them in the parking lot and inside the church.
- Hand sanitizer to use prior to receiving communion. Stations are available when entering/leaving the church.
- Liturgical aids and music sheets will be posted on our website. Please print these at home and bring them with you to church.

What should I know about parking and accessing the church?

- Please respect a minimum of 6 feet from others when entering and exiting the church.
- Parishioners may enter the church through the main door.

IMPORTANT: How will Communion be distributed?

- In order to more easily comply with recommended guidelines, communion distribution will take place *after the final blessing*.
- Ushers will direct you to communion stations and the exit afterward. Please take all your personal belongings with you and, if possible, sanitize your hands.
- Please maintain 6 feet of distance when approaching the Eucharistic ministers.
- The clergy and ministers will wear face coverings and use hand sanitizer before distribution (and during distribution if necessary), but they won't be wearing gloves. These precautions minimize the risk of infection and avoid the potential for sacrilegious loss of Our Lord onto the gloves.
- Similarly, you must not wear gloves to receive communion.
- You are strongly encouraged to received Holy Communion in your hand.
- If you insist on receiving on the tongue, however, you must go to one of the priests. Remove your face covering immediately before approaching the priest, and *do not lean forward when the Eucharist is offered*.
- Be assured that the clergy and ministers will sanitize their hands throughout distribution if any hand-to-hand or hand-to-mouth contact is made.