



St. Mary of the Visitation Parish

16 Cooper Street, Cambridge, ON, N3C 2N2

519-658-4443 www.stmaryhespeler.ca

January 2022

Dear Parents/Guardians of our First Communion Class,

I think for many of us we thought that the dawn of the New Year would mean that the Covid situation would have improved by now but, unfortunately, we are still very much under its influence. That means that with regards to the celebration of the sacraments we will still have to take Covid protocols under consideration.

At the present moment religious services are able to function at a 50% capacity with the wearing of masks and physical distancing required.

Based on the current restrictions and the number of registrations received we have scheduled the following celebrations:

First Reconciliation:

Parents and children are invited to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation on one of the following evenings:

Wednesday, March 23rd or Thursday, March 24th

The first Confessions will be celebrated very differently than in the past.

- Parents will sign-up for a 15-minute interval between 6:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. on either evening.
- The dates are not divided by school – you can attend any date and time that works for you.
- There will be no liturgy.
- The children will line up, go to confession and then depart. Their assigned penance can be completed at home.
- It is suggested that only one adult accompany the child.

This manner of celebration will keep the number of people in the church at any one time to a minimum and it is also the manner in which confessions are normally celebrated.

Please understand that this will be a very brief interaction, i.e. there is no need to bring family to witness nor to worry about being present with classmates.

First Communion:

First Holy Communion Masses will be grouped by school:

Our Lady of Fatima	Saturday, May 7 at 11:00 a.m. Saturday, May 7 at 1:00 p.m.
St. Gabriel	Saturday, May 14 at 11:00 a.m. Saturday, May 14 at 1:00 p.m.
St. Elizabeth	Saturday, May 28 at 1:00 p.m.

Students of St. Isidore may join their home school. Students of public schools may select a date. Parents are asked to register for a time on their designated date starting on January 18, 2022.

Parent meetings:

Parent meetings will be held via Zoom. There will be two opportunities. Please attend one of the following meetings:

Wednesday, February 9th at 7:00 p.m. or Thursday, February 10th at 7:00 p.m.

An invitation will be sent out by email one or two days in advance.

Sign-up

Beginning Tuesday, January 18th, you can sign up online for a time for First Reconciliation and for the Communion Mass. (www.stmaryhespeler.ca)

If the dates for first reconciliation do not work for you there is the option to come at the regular confession time on Saturdays between 4:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. Confessions are heard in the room off the sacristy (follow the sign).

For First Communion, there is also the option to attend a regular scheduled Saturday evening or Sunday Mass. Please contact the office if this is your wish.

Preparing your child:

Parents have always had the primary responsibility for the religious education of their children. Because of the pandemic it is even more important than ever that parents take on this role. Attached to this email are an examination of conscience, a simple Act of Contrition and a simple "How to go to Confession" page. Please work with your children on all of these. There is no need to memorize the Act of Contrition but they should be familiar with it. They should know the procedure for going to Confession and be prepared to enunciate their sins in a simple fashion.

Because of the pandemic many people are not attending Mass regularly. It would be wise to watch a televised or online Mass in order to familiarize your child with the responses for Mass.

Father will make every effort to connect with the students in the classroom, at least virtually, in the coming months.

Logistics for First Communion Masses:

Closer to the date, we will determine the number of guests who will be able to be invited. Each family will have one reserved pew in the centre of the church which would be for the first communicant, their parents and any other family member who would fit. (The pews are small and can accommodate a maximum of 5 adults.) Guests would be seated elsewhere in the church or in the overflow areas in the parish hall where the mass would be broadcast on the TV screens.

Photography:

We ask that you refrain from taking pictures/video during mass. Father will make himself available after Mass for a quick photo.

Gluten intolerance:

We do have low gluten hosts-please contact the office to request this option.

Certificate and donations:

In your pew we will place the First Communion certificate and an offertory envelope. Your support is much appreciated.

As we get closer to the dates we will reach out with more information to help prepare. In particular we will be in touch about church capacity and the number of guests that will be allowed to attend.

Yours in Christ,

Father Ed Henhoeffter