



# ARCHDIOCESE *of* KINGSTON

13 December 2020  
**3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent**

Dear Monsignor, Clergy and Lay Staff:

The Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario (ACBO) has released a review of their WorshipSafe manual. As the second wave of the pandemic is under way, the review comes at a fitting time, considering that the new levels of health precautions were announced on Friday and will take effect on Monday, December 15<sup>th</sup> at 12:01 a.m.

As you may be aware, there are 4 different Health Units in the Archdiocese and each Health Unit may be in a different health restriction zone. I have listed a few protocol updates and reminders, including a less stringent requirement for sanitizing pews. As we approach the Christmas season the designated colour zone for your region may change if the number of COVID-19 cases increase. A quick point of reference is provided for each of the colour zone requirements.

#### **Updates or reminders include:**

1. Face masks are required by law. A face mask covers the nose, mouth, and chin. You must wear a face mask in the parish office whenever you are within six feet of people and when celebrating Mass, unless you are speaking or singing at the ambo, altar, or presider's chair.
2. A pastor may require that those seeking an exemption from wearing a mask to bring evidence of the same, and when seated they should be placed in a designated area. They must wear a mask when coming to receive Holy Communion. A physician or other medical professional may provide the face mask exemption.
3. Contact tracing is now required at all Masses, on Sunday and daily Masses, in all zones other than **Green**. These contact tracing sheets are to be maintained and stored. The information can be collected by online Mass registration; alternatively, you may have an usher/volunteer write down the names and phone numbers of those who come to Mass.
4. Only pews that need to be used again within one hour need to be wiped down, by running a sanitized cloth along the tops and sides of each pew. This may provide some relief for your dedicated volunteers.
5. All volunteers, ushers, Eucharistic ministers and greeters are to be screened before they begin their duties.
6. Since it appears that a prolonged contact with others is the prime way the Covid-19 virus is spread, I would remind you that, if your parish is in an Orange zone or higher designation, the Celebration of the Eucharist should be no more than 30 to 40 minutes and homilies 3 to 5 minutes.
7. The Provincial Government has said that schools will remain open in all zones, as long as it remains safe for the children, staff and families.

As of Friday, December 11, 2020, the Province has designated the following colour zones for the 4 Health Units serving our Archdiocese:

## GREEN - Prevent

### Organized religious services, rites and ceremonies

- Limits for religious services rites or ceremonies, including wedding services and funeral services:
  - 30% capacity of the room indoors
  - 100 people outdoors

### Meeting and event spaces

- Capacity limits:
  - 50 people indoors
  - 100 people outdoors
- Booking multiple rooms for the same event not permitted
- Maximum of 50 people per room indoors if venue operates in accordance with the approved plan from the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health (Guidance for Meeting and Event Facilities During COVID-19)

### Employment of Lay Staff

- Pastors will ensure that all lay staff observe health precautions, which include physical distancing, wearing the face mask unless you are seated at your desk alone, washing and sanitizing hands regularly, etc. If lay staff are concerned about the health precautions or their own health, they may discuss working from home with the pastor.

## YELLOW - Protect

*Hastings & Prince Edward Public Health* <https://hpepublichealth.ca/the-novel-coronavirus-2019ncov/>

*KFL&A Health Unit* <https://www.kflaph.ca/en/healthy-living/novel-coronavirus.aspx>

*Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District* <https://healthunit.org/coronavirus/>

### Organized religious services, rites and ceremonies

- Limits for religious services rites or ceremonies, including wedding services and funeral services:
  - 30% capacity of the room indoors
  - 100 people outdoors

### Meeting and event spaces

- Capacity limits:
  - 50 people indoors
  - 100 people outdoors
- Booking multiple rooms for the same event not permitted
- Maximum of 50 people per room indoors, where physical distancing can be maintained if venue operates in accordance with the approved plan from the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health (Guidance for Meeting and Event Facilities During COVID-19)
- Require contact information for all people
- Limit of 6 people may be seated together
- Limit volume of music to be low enough that a normal conversation is possible
- A safety plan is required to be prepared and made available upon request

### **Employment of Lay Staff**

- Pastors will ensure that all lay staff observe health precautions, which include physical distancing, wearing the face mask unless you are seated at your desk alone, washing and sanitizing hands regularly, etc. If lay staff are concerned about the health precautions or their own health, they may discuss working from home with the pastor.

## **ORANGE - Restrict**

*Eastern Ontario Health Unit <https://eohu.ca/en>*

### **Organized religious services, rites and ceremonies**

- Limits for religious services rites or ceremonies, including wedding services and funeral services:
  - 30% capacity of the room indoors
  - 100 people outdoors

### **Meeting and event spaces**

- Capacity Limits:
  - 50 people indoors
  - 100 people outdoors
- Maximum of 50 people indoors per facility
- Booking multiple rooms for the same event not permitted
- Require contact information for all people
- Limit of 4 people may be seated together
- Limit volume of music to be low enough that a normal conversation is possible
- A safety plan is required to be prepared and made available upon request
- Answer screening questions about Covid-19 symptoms before they come in

### **Employment of Lay Staff**

- Pastors may arrange for lay staff to work from home.

## **RED - Control**

### **Organized religious services, rites and ceremonies**

- Limits for religious services rites or ceremonies, including wedding services and funeral services:
  - 30% capacity of the room indoors
  - 100 people outdoors

### **Meeting and event spaces**

- Capacity Limits:
  - 10 people indoors
  - 25 people outdoors
- Maximum of 10 people per facility indoors
- Require contact information for all people
- Limit of 4 people may be seated together
- Limit volume of music to be low enough that a normal conversation is possible
- A safety plan is required to be prepared and made available upon request

- Answer screening questions about Covid-19 symptoms and exposures before they come in

### **Employment of Lay Staff**

- Pastors may arrange for lay staff to work from home.

Now is a wonderful time to go deeper in prayer and, with continued love and joy, build up our communities of faith. Let us remind ourselves that, the ways in which we communicate the health precautions to the faithful reflects our pastoral care, for their spiritual, physical and emotional well-being.

I am deeply grateful and want to thank you for all your work to ensure everyone's good health. Know that I am mindful of the sacrifices and dedication you are making to guarantee the welfare of your parishioners.

If you have any questions, please contact the Chancery office.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+Michael Mulhall  
Archdiocese of Kingston