

The Diocese of Southern Ohio

Updated Guidelines for Public Worship

June 16, 2021

As the COVID-19 pandemic infections continue to track downward in our area, we give praise to God and to all of you for your prayers, perseverance and care for one another. We are also thankful and blessed to have medical consultants in our diocese to guide our decisions throughout this pandemic.

As in the past, we continue to follow the CDC and governor's guidelines to make our recommendations. It is important to note that the diocese does not mandate any specific action to our parishes – the final decisions for offering in-person gathering rests with the clergy and leadership of each congregation, taking into consideration the health and safety of its own congregation and guests.

The COVID Medical Task Force will continue to monitor COVID variants as they present themselves. If the situation should warrant reconsideration of these guidelines, they will be revised.

Masks

No mask is required for any person who is fully vaccinated. Masks are required for persons who are unvaccinated or in the presence of persons who are not able to be vaccinated, such as children and the immunocompromised.

It may be a pastoral consideration for a vaccinated person to wear a mask in a group where the vaccination rate is unknown.

In general, people who are not fully vaccinated do not need to wear a mask outdoors. However, as a pastoral matter or for personal preference, masks may be worn.

Communion

Pursuant to CDC guidelines, we are now permitting full communion with common cup and intinction. However, intinction by the celebrant only is the preferred method, placing the intincted wafer in the hand or mouth of the communicant. If the celebrant or a designated eucharist minister prefers to allow intinction by the communicant, a separate, shallow cup or bowl should be used rather than the chalice.

Capacity, Choral Singing and Books

Churches can return to full capacity; choral singing without masks is permitted; Prayer Books and Hymnals can be returned to the pews. The collection plate can again be passed. Regular sanitation practices should continue to be followed.

Coffee hours and receptions

Coffee hours and receptions can be resumed. However, if you are serving food, it is recommended that you keep items individually wrapped, or provide a server for buffets to avoid common utensils.

Youth Camps

For day or overnight camps where everyone is fully vaccinated, no masks are required. Persons may choose to wear a mask for their own safety or concern for others who may be unvaccinated. When participants are not vaccinated, masks are required.

Questions regarding these guidelines may be directed to the Rev. Canon John R. Johanssen, Canon to the Ordinary (jjohanssen@diosohio.org), or Carine de Lange, Operations Executive (cdelange@diosohio.org).