

Updated Covid-19 Liturgical Guidelines October 1, 2020

While keeping best practices (e.g. wearing a facial covering and maintaining an appropriate physical distance) the following guidelines are permitted* and are to be observed by the weekend of October 10th and 11th, 2020:

Greeting of Parishioners/Processions:

- Clergy may greet members of the assembly as they arrive at/depart from the church. However, wearing masks and physical distancing must be observed and congregating outside of the church building should not be encouraged.
- Entrance/recessional processions down the center aisle are allowed. The amount of time the procession is near the congregants does not constitute close contact.

Music:

- Small musical ensembles, e.g. trios or quartets (with expanded physical distancing and use of facial coverings when not singing or playing), are permitted. Consideration should be given to the size of the nave and its relationship to the loft. If the ensemble and/or cantor is located in front of the congregation, sufficient distance must be observed and/or the use of plastic barriers.
- Singing by a cantor of all customary parts of the Mass (Gloria, Responsorial Psalm, Gospel acclamation etc.) may be resumed and is encouraged.
- The prohibition of congregational singing at **indoor** Masses remains in effect.
- Congregational singing at **outdoor** Masses is permitted, but only if the assembly wears masks.

Personnel:

- Altar servers may be employed with the permission of their parents, and only if physical distancing in the sanctuary is possible. Altar servers should continue to wear masks throughout the Mass.

Distribution of Holy Communion:

- Parishes are strongly encouraged to distribute Holy Communion at the proper time within Mass, unless there are unique circumstances that warrant the distribution of Communion after Mass. If the decision is made to continue distributing Communion after Mass, the pastor must communicate the reasons for doing so to the Episcopal Vicar.
 - As a reminder, when the communicant approaches the Communion minister, he/she removes the facial covering, receives in the hand, immediately consumes the Host, and then replaces his/her mask before walking away to ensure the Host is consumed immediately out of proper respect for the sacrament.
- Dismissal protocol might be necessary to prevent the assembly from congregating at the exits after Mass. It is suggested that the congregation be invited to exit the church beginning with the last pew and working toward the first pew, rather than having everyone exit at the same time.

**Pastors have the discretion to employ these relaxations or not, if they choose not to.*

Guidelines for the following remain unchanged:

- The *Presentation of the Gifts* by the faithful continues to be suspended. The bread and wine are placed on the Credence Table in the sanctuary.
- The *Sign of Peace* is omitted.

Under consideration:

- During the next few weeks, the Episcopal Vicars will be conducting conversations in the regional meetings regarding having standard seating in all parishes that allows the assembly to be seated in every other pew while maintaining the six feet distance requirement between individuals or family units in each pew.