

Revised diocesan guidelines in light of most recent CDC report to begin on Saturday, May 15, 2021

1. Fully vaccinated people may remove their masks when outdoors on Episcopal Church property. In the rare cases where an outdoor gathering might be understood as “crowded,” masks are recommended.
2. Indoor social distancing measures may be relaxed with provision made for those who wish to remain socially distanced. Each church should keep some 6-foot-spaced seating.
 - a. Vaccinated individuals may sit more closely with other vaccinated individuals. If another’s vaccination status is unknown, assume they are unvaccinated and keep them safe by keeping socially distanced.
 - b. Unvaccinated individuals are welcomed and encouraged to keep themselves and others safe through social distancing.
3. Indoor singing and chanting (congregational, ensemble and individual) may begin again. Masking continues to be necessary for public worship, so singers and chanters must be masked. However, we encourage a gradual approach as vaccination continues.
 - a. Consider bringing sung hymns back over time: start with a few weeks of post-communion and departing hymns, then add a processional, etc. Build over several weeks to music in the middle of the service.
4. Fully vaccinated lectors and officiants (including clergy) may remove their masks in the course of their duties when an amplification system is in use and they are speaking alone. Masks must remain on during communal prayer and when singing or chanting.
5. With the return to singing and relaxed social distancing, I ask that within each Minster provision be made for those who wish to keep themselves safer. The Minster Team should assure that at least one parish in each Minster offers a “quiet” service without singing or an online service for those who wish to remain at home.

Most previous guidelines continue with slight adjustment:

- The diocesan staff’s [collection of county-level data](#) is proving helpful to our clergy and lay leaders, so the practice will continue indefinitely. **The color-coding and guidance for indoor worship will also remain in effect.** These are the three tiers and their meaning:
 - **Yellow** (less than 10 percent test positivity and fewer than 100 per 100,000 incidence). Unless under a general diocesan moratorium, parishes can conduct indoor, in-person worship and other events.
 - **Orange** (greater than 10 percent test positivity or greater than 100 per 100,000 incidence). Local discernment; parishes can conduct indoor, in-person worship and other events, but clergy and lay leaders must confer and discern if it is wise to do so in light of what they know their local context and culture.
 - **Red** (greater than 10 percent test positivity and greater than 100 per 100,000 incidence). Indoor, in-person worship and other events must be suspended for at least two weeks. Return to indoor in-person worship and events is allowed after two weeks if a parish enters the Orange status.
- Indoor, public worship and other open meetings: masking will continue for all persons.
- Indoor, closed meetings of adults where all are known to be vaccinated: masks may be removed. If children or adults of unknown vaccination status are present, masking will continue.
- Use of the common cup is still restricted. Communion may be distributed in bread only.

- Registration, sign-ups or attendance records must continue to be used and records kept for one month.
- Use amplification equipment as possible to allow less need for personal projection when speaking.
- Consider making services shorter: readings may be limited to the gospel and one other lesson.
- Continue ventilation practices: open windows and doors!
- Spaces and surfaces must continue to be regularly cleaned. (Because of new learning, previous guidance about cleaning after every individual use may be disregarded.)
- Coffee hour and feeding ministries may continue, with the encouragement to move outside and to remain masked when not eating or drinking.
- Outside groups are allowed to use space according to local leadership discernment, provided they agree to (and actually do) follow these guidelines.
- As able, continue to offer online worship and meeting options to continue welcoming those who do not wish to gather in person.
 - Inform in-person attendees about recording or streaming practices. A sign or bulletin notice will suffice. Create areas of the nave where worshippers may worship without being on camera.
- When a positive test result is reported for a person who attended a gathering, parish leadership should call the local health department for guidance.