

Returning to Public Worship Guidelines for the Episcopal Diocese of Milwaukee

Frequently Asked Questions

(date of answer) is in parenthesis

1. **Q: Are UV disinfection or long-term disinfection/sanitization procedures acceptable?**

A: The CDC recommendations for cleaning and sanitizing that are referenced in the guideline are currently considered sufficient. Ultraviolet room disinfection, antimicrobial surface coating and sanitizing, and antimicrobial cloth products are being aggressively marketed. Regulation of these products by the EPA, FDA, and various state regulatory bodies are limited and often not subject to premarket approval or efficacy standards. Often the evidence is only available from the manufacturer. Companies make and sell UV devices with various levels of effectiveness. At this time, the effectiveness of these products against COVID “like” viruses (SARs and MERS) has only been shown in the laboratory.

(6/11/2020)

2. **Q: Are temperature checks recommended or required for entry into a service?**

A: No. Fever is not present in most early cases of COVID and would not be present in Asymptomatic COVID. Temperature screening devices are generally inaccurate and mandatory screening has resulted in unnecessary exclusion. The screening questions in Requirements Section 6 are the most well confirmed early symptoms of COVID to use for screening. **(6/11/2020)**

3. **Q: Are COVID-19 Immunity-Based Licenses (“Immunity Passports”) Valid/Ethical and should they be accepted?**

A: No. At this point, there is not enough evidence about the effectiveness of antibody-mediated immunity to guarantee the accuracy of an “immunity passport” or “risk-free certificate.” The implementation of such documents also raises serious ethical and legal issues.

[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(20\)31034-5/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(20)31034-5/fulltext)

(6/22/2020)

4. **Q: Do parishioners, visitors, or clergy need to sign an informed consent to attend, or participate in worship?**

A: A signed consent is not required. Each parish should have a means to inform clergy, congregation, and visitors of the safety practices that will be in effect, and the information from the CDC for individuals who are at higher risk for severe illness from COVID so that they can make an informed decision prior

to choosing to attend/ participate in group worship. See: People Who Need to Take Extra Precautions www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/index.html (6/16/2020)

5. **Q: What are the allowed activities and where are they allowed?**

A: The following is the current guidance:

If it's earlier than July 12 or if your county is not green:

- You may not gather for worship in your building except for 6 or fewer persons present to live-stream services.
- You may gather outside for worship with 10 or fewer people for graveside committal services, baptisms, weddings or funerals.
- You may not gather outside for Holy Eucharist or other gatherings.
- You may make home communion visits on or after July 12.
- You may conduct drive-in services.

If it's July 12 or later, your county is green and you do NOT have an approved plan:

- You may not gather for worship in your building except for 6 or fewer persons present to live-stream services.
- You may hold a service of Holy Eucharist indoors for 6 or fewer people if needed to consecrate elements for home communion visits.
- You may gather outside for worship with 10 or fewer people for graveside committal services, baptisms, weddings or funerals.
- You may not gather outside for Holy Eucharist or other gatherings.
- You may make home communion visits on or after July 12.
- You may conduct drive-in services.

If it's July 12 or later, your county is green and you have an approved plan:

- You may gather inside for worship with 10 or fewer people (for July, perhaps different capacity later)
- You may gather outside for worship with 10 or fewer people twice. Once you have gathered twice, you may increase capacity to the lesser of 1) available space, 2) health dept recommendation, 3) Way Forward task force-imposed capacity for your county.
- You may hold drive-in worship services with no capacity limit if no one gets out of a car.
- You may conduct outdoor gatherings for weddings, funerals or baptisms up to the capacity limits. You may have graveside committal services up to the outdoor capacity limits.

- You may conduct indoor gatherings for weddings, funerals or baptisms for up to 10 people during July (perhaps different capacity later).
- You may make home communion visits.
- You may hold other gatherings inside or outside provided that their size is constrained so that the risk of a CoVid-19-positive person attending that gathering in your county is 1% or less as shown on the Regathering Risk Assessment dashboard. All Way Forward Guidelines must continue to be observed. **(6/18/20)**

6. Q: Can number of people be increased to 20 for the first two sessions of outdoor worship to better test procedures?

A: No, the first two sessions should be limited to 10, consistent with the majority of Phase One recommendations. Use the individuals in family groups to test size and spacing of layout. **(6/23/2020)**

7. Q: Can outdoor worship spaces be used more than once in a day?

A: Yes, provided the guidelines and approved plans are followed. Any railings, tables, benches, or other “touchpoints” in the space should be cleaned between uses as much as possible. <https://wedc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/COVID-19-Outdoor-Gatherings-Guidelines.pdf>
(6/23/2020)

8. Q: Can the number of people preparing live stream services be increased to 10?

A: Yes, with the following considerations:

- Attendees are pre-screened for each session with questions in approved plan.
- Strong consideration is given to limiting the members participating in the live-stream preparations. **(6/23/2020)**

9. Q: Where can I find the current COVID-19 symptom screening questions?

A: As information becomes available, the CDC will regularly continue to update the symptom list here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html> **(6/23/2020)**

10. Q: Where can we find information on individual decision making for higher risk individuals?

A: **All** members of the parish and others using the facilities will be provided the following tools so that they can make an informed, personal decision prior to participating in a church function and other events:

People of Any Age with Underlying Medical Conditions -

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people->

[with-medical-conditions.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fneed-extra-precautions%2Fgroups-at-higher-risk.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/groups-at-higher-risk.html)

Older Adults -

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/older-adults.html> (7/2/20)

11. Q: Can parishes that are not 'green' in the Diocese Risk Assessment meet outdoors and if so, what are the limits on the number of attendees?

A: In keeping with the desire to limit probability of a random attendee having CoVid-19 to 1% or less, the Task Force has determined that parishes that are in "yellow" counties using the Diocese Risk Assessment Dashboard (The Dashboard) can choose to meet outdoors in gatherings of 10 people or less, including clergy, using the required measures in the guidelines for masking, social distancing and other requirements.

Parishes where the Dashboard rates counties 'orange' or 'red', parishes may not meet outdoors until the Dashboard assessment changes.

Parishes are required to check the Dashboard periodically during the week and decide on conducting services mid-week to allow for notification.

Since the Dashboard assessment colors of counties can change daily, parishes need to check it periodically. If an assessment color worsens (i.e changes from 'green' to 'yellow') after the decision to meet is made and the parish has a service scheduled, the parish can meet for **that week only**, in accordance with the guidelines. Following that one week, the restrictions on meeting and/or numbers of attendees for the Dashboard assessment color will remain in effect until that assessment changes back to a better one. (7/2/20)

12. Q: Can attendees to Drive-up services leave their cars?

A: No. The concept of 'stay-in-the car with your household, drive up' worship allows the safest, lowest risk, group worship experience for higher risk individuals and in counties with the highest rates of COVID. (7/2/20)

13. Q: Can a parish conduct a Eucharist service online and then have attendees come to the church to only receive communion.

A: Not currently. The Task Force has concerns with this approach to the Eucharist and communion but is continuing to examine this possibility. (7/2/20)

14. Q: Can clergy schedule pastoral visits and can communion be a part of the visit?

A: The Task Force understands that safely providing pastoral care in these times is becoming more vital to the health of our parishioners and our parishes.

Therefore, pastoral visits may be conducted under the following conditions:

- The visits will be scheduled, and screening questions will be asked and answered prior to the visit.
- The visit will be conducted outdoors with all participants masked and a minimum of 6-foot distancing.
- The visits will meet the Safeguarding Online™ recommendations for visibility.
- The visits will be as short as possible.

Distributing communion is not encouraged at this time. However, at the discretion of the clergy communion may be administered only if the parish has resumed celebration of the Eucharist in accordance with the Guidelines and it is distributed as soon after the service as possible. Proper procedures for distribution and sanitation as outlined in the Guidelines shall be followed.

The Task Force is continuing review pastoral visits, especially for those who an outdoor visit is not feasible and will update the Guidelines accordingly. **(7/2/20)**