

## **Returning to Public Worship Guidelines for the Episcopal Diocese of Milwaukee**

from the Way Forward Task Force

As we make plans to begin reimagining our common life together as the Church, the following are requirements and recommendations set forth by the Bishop in consultation with the diocesan Way Forward Task Force. These are given to express Christ's and our love for each other spiritually, physically, and emotionally. The primary health risk of reopening is transmission of illness by individuals who are infected but have no symptoms or very mild symptoms. The Four Pillars of preventing this are:

1. **Distancing 6-10 feet** apart or more **and limiting** the amount of time spent close together in an enclosed space **(V5)**
2. **Masks** to prevent droplet and aerosol transmission
3. **Hygiene:** handwashing, hand sanitizer, and cleaning surfaces
4. **Screening** to minimize exposure to active infection

***Based upon the current research, our guiding principles are still supported: the virus is spread through direct contact, large respiratory droplets, and small particles in the air (aerosols).***

***Our Risk Analysis is based on:***

- a. The formula for assessing the risk of COVID Infection: Risk of Infection = Exposure to Virus X Time (spent with contagious people and /or air containing the virus).***
- b. In evaluating risk, we also need to be aware that Risk of Outcome = Likelihood X Consequences (infection, hospitalization, and death) (V5)***

These requirements and recommendations apply to all gatherings for worship including baptisms, weddings, and funerals and should be addressed in individual parish plans.

*The Way Forward Task Force and the Bishop of Milwaukee created **and regularly updates** these guidelines after reviewing and **considering** the scientific evidence concerning the transmission of COVID-19 at church gatherings and the recommendations of national, state and local health authorities, as well as acknowledging the guidelines of other dioceses and faith communities. The guidelines will continue to be updated as new information becomes available. (V2) (V5)*

*The Way Forward Task Force also is committed to providing the necessary information to individuals so that they can make an informed, personal decision prior to attending in-person worship, a church event or meeting. We expect parishes to provide information about safety*

*Version 2 - Italic (V2- June 17, 2020)*

*Version 3 - Italic (V3- July 16, 2020)*

*Version 4 – Italic (V4 – Sept. 10, 2020)*

***Version 5 – Italic (V5-Oct. 22, 2020)***

*practices and CDC decision making tools to parishioners and those who attend church functions. (V3)*

After reviewing the following guidelines, each congregation must submit a plan for their parish's return to public worship to the office of the Bishop for review and approval by the Way Forward Taskforce. Public worship may begin once the parish has received notification of approval. ***Changes to the plans and for other events will also be submitted in accordance with the Guidelines. (V5)***

*The guidelines are organized into Requirements and Recommendations Sections. Requirements shall be incorporated into Parish Way Forward Plans and activities. Recommendations may be incorporated at the discretion of the Parish. (V3)*

## Section 1 - Requirements

### Attendance, Distancing and Screening for All Activities

1. *The final decision on change in Phases for the diocese will be done in collaboration with the Way Forward Task Force/Bishop and the parish.*
  - a. *The number of people allowed may become more or less restrictive based on the application of Diocese of Milwaukee Regathering Risk Assessment Dashboard (Dashboard) and county evaluation criteria. The number may vary from county to county and from day to day. (V3)*
  - b. *The number of people allowed is the number that results in 1% probability or less that a person with COVID-19 could be present, your county’s restriction, or the facility capacity with social distancing, whichever is smaller. (V3)*
2. *The criteria to assist in the determination number of people allowed will come from:*
  - a. **Your local health departments, Wisconsin Department of Public Health and the Centers for Disease Control. (V5)**
  - b. *Dashboard found at:*  
<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1uv-7Dx4w1BDQSACf827iWCbflzMSirV2NFidYosQwD8/edit?usp=sharing>
3. *Parishes are required to check the Dashboard periodically during the week and decide on conducting services mid-week to allow for notification. (V3)*

*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 or county will remain in effect until that assessment changes back to a better one. (V3)*

*The following is the current guidance for application of the Dashboard (V3):*

*All situations require screening, mask and social distancing unless otherwise specified (V3).*

- a. *If your county is not ‘green’:*

- i. *You may not gather for worship in your building except for 10 or fewer persons present to live-stream services. **Only those necessary to conduct the service can be present.(V5)***
  - ii. *You may gather outside for worship with 10 or fewer people for graveside committal services, baptisms, weddings or funerals.*
  - iii. *You may not gather outside for Holy Eucharist or other gatherings.*
  - iv. *You may make home communion visits.*
  - v. *You may conduct services where participants drive into a designated parking area if no one gets out of a car. (V3/V4)*
- b. *If your county is ‘green’ and you do NOT have an approved plan:*
- i. *You may not gather for worship in your building except for 10 or fewer persons present to live-stream services.*
  - ii. *You may hold a service of Holy Eucharist indoors for 10 or fewer people if needed to solely **consecrate** elements for home communion visits. **Only those necessary to conduct the service can be present.(V5)***
  - iii. *You may gather outside for worship with 10 or fewer people for graveside committal services, baptisms, weddings or funerals.*
  - iv. *You may not gather outside for Holy Eucharist or other gatherings.*
  - v. *You may make home communion visits.*
  - vi. *You may conduct services where participants drive into a designated parking area if no one gets out of a car. (V3/V4)*
- c. *If your county is ‘green’ or ‘yellow’ and you have an approved plan:*
- i. *You may gather inside for worship with 10 or fewer.*
  - ii. *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. *Dashboard – up to the number of people that would provide a 1% or less probability that person with COVID-19 could be present at the event.*
  - iii. *You may hold services where participants drive into a designated parking area with no capacity limit if no one gets out of a car.(V4)*
  - iv. *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.*

- v. *You may conduct indoor gatherings for weddings, funerals or baptisms for up to 10 people (perhaps different capacity later).*
  - vi. *You may make home communion visits.*
  - vii. *You may hold other gatherings inside or outside provided that on the Dashboard – up to the number of people that would provide a 1% or less probability that person with COVID-19 could be present at the event. (V3)*
- d. *Parishes where the Dashboard rates counties ‘orange’ or ‘red’, parishes may not meet for in person worship until the Dashboard assessment changes. (V3)*
4. Each parish will decide on a system that works best for them to create a schedule of when people will attend services.
  5. No one who is ill shall attend public worship.
  6. *It is required that clergy, congregation, and visitors be provided the information from the CDC about individuals who are at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19, so that they can make an informed, personal decision prior to choosing to participate in church activities. **The CDC information is updated periodically so the links should be checked monthly.** Risk factors include **but are not limited to:** (V3) (V5)*
    - a. *Age 65 and older*
    - b. **Cancer (V5)**
    - c. **Type 2 diabetes (V5)**
    - d. **COPD (V5)**
    - e. *Immune compromise*
    - f. *Significant heart, lung, liver, or kidney conditions*
    - g. **Smoking (V5)**
    - h. **Moderate and Severe Obesity (V5)**
    - i. *Pregnancy*
    - j. *For the complete list of those who need to take extra precautions see: [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/index.html) 3 (V2) and the CDC decision making tools see (V3):*

**People of Any Age with Underlying Medical Conditions -**

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-with-medical-conditions.html> (V3/V5)

**Older Adults -**

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-with-medical-conditions.html> (V3/V5)

7. Each parish will ask screening questions of each attendee. If anyone answers “yes” to one or more of these questions, they may not attend in person worship (V3).

a. Do you have any of the following symptoms: (V3)

- i. Fever and/or chills (V3)
- ii. Cough
- iii. Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- iv. Fatigue
- v. Muscle or body aches
- vi. Headache
- vii. New loss of taste or smell
- viii. Sore throat
- ix. Congestion or runny nose (V3)
- x. Nausea or vomiting (V3)
- xi. Diarrhea (V3)

b. The following is the current list of symptoms:

[www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html?CDC\\_AA\\_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fabout%2Fsymptoms.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fabout%2Fsymptoms.html)

c. In the past two weeks have you had exposure to anyone diagnosed with COVID - 19?

8. Social distancing of at least **6-10 feet** must be maintained. (V5)

9. *Sunday School, nursery care, and coffee hour should not be held until allowed by the diocese and local health departments. The parish will need to submit a revised plan for approval prior to starting these activities. (V3)*
10. Each parish shall create a plan to maintain a list of those who attended each service. Parishes will assist public health departments with contact tracing. If a parishioner who attended worship tests positive for COVID-19, the local department of public health will perform contact tracing for that individual.
11. Clergy and vestry members will create a strategy for addressing possible behavior of non-compliant and defiant attendees.
12. Each parish will contact their insurance carrier to determine coverage for infectious diseases and specific requirements.
13. *Clergy officiating services will be identified in the plan. Include the numbers of services each day for each. Any use of supply clergy shall be addressed in the plan or approved by the Bishop on a case by case basis. Clergy will properly wash and sanitize hands between services if there are multiple service in a day. (V3)*
14. *At this time parish and outside organization meetings (except 12-step recovery programs or other churches worshiping in our facilities) will be conducted online or outdoors. Any use of the church facilities will meet the same requirements herein for social distancing, masking and disinfection/cleaning required for worship. (V3)*
15. *Have masks available for attendees who do not come with one. (V3)*
16. *Have multiple bottles of antibacterial hand gel available:*
  - a. *At the entrance/exit doors.*
  - b. *In each pew if able.*
  - c. *Near the altar. (V3)*
17. ***Any time gathered indoors or outdoors shall limited to less than 30 minutes and masks worn. (V5)***
18. ***Indoor spaces shall have open windows and/or doors for ventilation (even in winter). (V5)***

## **Hygiene and Masks**

1. All present over the age of 2 must wear masks.
2. Cleaning must follow the guidelines below. (see Cleaning Guidelines)

3. Multiple services may not be held in the same space, on the same day. They must be held in separate spaces using separate entrances, inside or outdoor, if held on the same day. (see Cleaning Guidelines)
4. ***No congregational or choral singing or wind instruments. Choir or ensemble rehearsals inside or outside the church building are not allowed at this time. (V5)***

WCC Church Music in the age of COVID-19 :

<https://www.wichurches.org/2020/05/08/church-music-covid19/>

***CDC, Short clear update on How COVID-19 Spreads, Oct 5, 2020;***

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-covid-spreads.html> ***(V5)***

5. The peace shall be exchanged verbally only.
6. Offering plates should be placed at the entrance/exit and/or encourage congregation to give online. After each service, place the offerings given in a secure place and wait at least **24 hours** to handle and count the money given. ***Hands should be washed before and after the handling and counting. (V5)***
7. Gifts that are to be consecrated should be placed on the credence table before the service or on the altar itself.
8. Communion shall be distributed in one kind (bread only).
9. Remove hymnals, BCPs, reusable papers, pencils, etc. from pews.
10. ***Snug fitting masks shall be worn by all, including during preparation for the service (vesting), pre-recording, videotaping, or livestreaming (if participants are not from the same household) inside the church, especially in poorly ventilated spaces. (V5)***

### ***Outdoor Gatherings (V3)***

1. *Outdoor gatherings, both for worship and for other purposes, are allowed by the Bishop on the grounds of the churches of the Diocese of Milwaukee as of 07/12/2020 and upon approval of the parish plan. The individual parishes will continue to monitor their county COVID-19 data and Diocese Risk Assessment Dashboard (Dashboard) using their local health department and diocese provided data.*
2. *Parishes shall monitor local public health guidelines and the Dashboard to ensure that they remain in compliance as requirements are changing day-to-day. If your local public health authority has not published a capacity limit for outside gatherings, use the capacity limit for the **State of Wisconsin Emergency Order(s)**. **The most restrictive guidance from either the Dashboard or health department/state shall be used. (V5)***



3. *Capacity for gatherings shall begin with no more than 10 people. Once you have gathered at least twice with 10 people and have familiarized yourself with logistics, capacity may increase up to the limit set by your local public health authority or the Dashboard, whichever is smaller. The Dashboard limits are as follows:*
  - 1) *Counties that are ‘green’ on the Dashboard – up to the number of people that would provide a 1% or less probability that person with COVID-19 could be present at the event.*
  - 2) *Counties that are ‘yellow’ on the Dashboard - up to the number of people that would provide a 1% or less probability (10 people) that a person with COVID-19 could be present at the event.*
  - 3) *Counties that are ‘orange’ or ‘red’ on the Dashboard – in-person gatherings are not allowed.*
4. *Services where participants drive into a designated parking area are exempted from capacity limits provided participants do not leave their vehicles and provided the other guidelines in #6 below are observed. (V4)*
5. *If there is inclement weather the service must be cancelled or remain outdoors (if there is no lightning).*
6. *In all cases, outdoor gatherings shall observe the following requirements from the Way Forward Guidelines:*
  - a. *Setting up the space:*
    - 1) *All participants over age 2 shall wear masks. Parishes will supply masks for persons not bringing their own.*
    - 2) *Parishes will mark off locations for sitting/standing/placing their own chairs at 6’ or greater intervals before participants arrive. Use of semi-permanent marking media, such as athletic field paint on grass or chalk on asphalt, is encouraged.*
    - 3) *All participants shall bring their own chairs if chairs are to be used, and participants will take chairs with them when they leave. Parishes may not provide chairs.*
    - 4) *Parishes will mark entrances and exits to outside spaces in a fashion that encourages a single direction of pedestrian traffic through the space (entrance is not the same place as exit).*
  - b. *As participants arrive:*
    - 1) *Participants should be asked screening questions*
      - a. *It is preferred they be asked during pre-registration.*
      - b. *Upon arrival answers will be confirmed that there are no changes.*

- c. *If questions were not asked at pre-registration, then all questions shall be asked at the entry.*
  - 2) *No one who is ill, or who answers ‘yes’ to any screening question, shall be admitted to an outdoor gathering.*
  - 3) *All participants will sanitize their hands.*
  - 4) *Participants should wait to be accompanied to a designated, marked location where they will stand or sit. Persons who live together may sit closer than 6’.*
  - 5) *Attendance shall be taken and records maintained. All parishes will cooperate with public health authorities in any contact tracing investigations.*
  - c. *During the gathering:*
    - 1) *Parish buildings, including restrooms, will not be available.*
    - 2) *Participants shall not shout or raise their voices. Use of electronic amplification of voices (e.g. microphone, bullhorn) is encouraged whenever possible. Do not use a megaphone.*
    - 3) *Non-vocal music is encouraged. Singing and use of wind or brass instruments is prohibited.*
    - 4) *Children are not permitted to run around during the gathering.*
  - d. *After the gathering:*
    - 1) *Participants will wait to leave the meeting area until they are dismissed individually.*
    - 2) *Participants should not linger to talk with one another following the gathering. Clergy will not greet participants individually as people leave gatherings.*
7. *Churches, organizations, and other groups who use diocesan properties may begin meeting outside as of the same date these guidelines take effect, provided all the guidelines are observed. (V3)*
- 8. *Outdoor Tents with sides or low tops should be considered an indoor space. (V5)***

#### ***Temporary License for Communion Under Special Circumstances (V4)***

1. *Parishes wishing to conduct an on-line Eucharist service and distribute communion at the Church, either outdoors to parishioners in cars or indoors with parishioners coming in at assigned times may do so with an approved plan.*
2. *This will be a temporary license to conduct these services while under the COVID-19 restrictions and will end on a date determined by the diocese. This type of service is being temporarily licensed as a pastoral response to the restrictions required to combat the spread of the COVID-19 virus. All licenses will expire at a date determined by the diocese.*

3. *The parishes will use language in their communications, social media postings and website postings that conveys the message of the temporary nature of this method of worship and receiving communion as a part of the Eucharist service. The use of the terms Drive-In, Drive-up, Walk-up or Walk-in Communion is not allowed in correspondence, on social media posts or in website posts since it portrays communion as a commodity not a sacrament.*
4. *It is important to note that these measures are to follow the general rubrics of the BCP and are temporary.*
5. *Plans for distribution of communion in this manner must be submitted to the Way Forward Task Force for the Bishop's approval.*
6. *The following conditions will be placed on the approvals:*
  - 1) *Preparation for distribution should include advanced registration*
  - 2) *Include an affirmation that the communicant understands that distribution is a sacrament [only when] in conjunction with the preceding Liturgy, which they intend to attend [virtually / on-line].*
  - 3) *This registration will be maintained by the parish for 30 days for potential future use in contact tracing.*
  - 4) *The distribution will include the following*
    - i. *Give Communion using words in the BCP.*
    - ii. *Pray the Post Communion Prayer.*
    - iii. *Provide a Blessing if being distributed by a priest or Prayer if being distributed by a deacon.*
    - iv. *Say a dismissal.*
7. *Each parish who received approval will submit a report to the Way Forward Task Force within 14 days of the Sunday after All Saints Day for 2020 and at other dates specified by the diocese if the Guidelines continue beyond 2020. The report will include the number of services, number of communicants served, observations, and a reflection on use of this service if COVID-19 restrictions continue into the next year.*

### ***Other Parish Meetings and Gatherings (V3)***

1. *In-person meetings and gatherings are highly discouraged at this time. (V3)*
2. *However, if the at the discretion of the Rector, Priest-in-Charge or Senior Warden an in-person meeting is required the following options be used in this order:*
  - 1) *Outdoor meeting using masks and social distancing. These can be held either on-site if a place is available or off-site in a safe, public space.*
  - 2) *Indoor meeting on site. All requirements for masking, social distancing, single use of spaces, **ventilation, and cleaning** shall be met. (V3) **(V5)***

3. *Meeting size shall be limited to 10 or less people in counties that are ‘green’ or ‘yellow’ on the Dashboard and 5 or less for counties that are ‘orange’ or ‘red’ on the Dashboard. (V3) Meetings shall be the minimum time required but not longer than 30 minutes without a break where the participants leave the building. Whenever possible, windows should be open. (V5)*
4. *No food or beverages shall be served or provided. (V3)*

### ***Standard Guidelines (V5)***

1. ***Standard Guidelines are established to allow parishes to obtain approval for an activity or plan to worship or event by agreeing to follow a standard procedure for that event. The purpose is to reduce the administrative burden on the parishes. Request for approval can be submitted by email stating the intention to use a Standard Guideline and the necessary information concerning the worship or event requested in the Standard Guideline.***
2. ***The following Standard Guidelines are in place:***
  - 1) ***[Standard Guideline #1 - For Temporary Communion Under Special Circumstances – Walk-In](#)***
  - 2) ***[Standard Guideline #2 - For General Visitation – Walk-In](#)***

## Section 2 - Recommendations

### For Public Worship in the Church Building

1. If a person is concerned about whether they should attend public worship, they should consult with their health care provider.
2. *Clergy and staff members at higher risk who cannot work from home may return to work if the nature of their work and workspace allows them to practice proper social distancing and protective measures. (V2)*
3. If possible, keep doors propped open for ventilation purposes, and to prevent unnecessary touching of the same surface by multiple people.
4. ***Use fans for exhaust ventilation purposes. (V5)***
5. Section off pews to place individuals at least **6-10** feet apart. **(V5)**
6. Families who reside in the same household may sit together.
7. Make the liturgy available with the following:
  - a. Print the service in bulletins and have a bin available to have then thrown away in and/or encourage people to take bulletins home.
  - b. Create an online version that can be used on electronic devices.
  - c. Encourage attendees to bring their own BCPs from home.
8. ***Masked celebrant/officiant using a microphone and normal voice volume is preferred over masked with loud, unassisted voice. (V5)***

### Should a Parish Choose the Liturgy for Holy Communion

1. It is highly recommended that communion wafers be used rather than homemade bread.
2. Only one member of the clergy will distribute communion.
3. Celebrant should use antibacterial gel before and after consecration, and after distribution.
4. If Deacon and/or other altar party is present, they all must remain **6-10** feet apart. **(V5)**
5. When distributing communion, the host should be dropped in the hand of those receiving to avoid hand to hand contact.

6. If hand to hand contact is made, the clergy person will use antibacterial gel before distributing to the next person.
7. Parishes may create a schedule and safe process to allow people to come to the parish to receive communion that maintains the four principles listed above for maintaining safe and healthy individuals and communities.
8. If the congregation comes forward to receive communion:
  - a. The people should not come to the altar rail, but rather the priest should stand at a place in the middle and have the people approach them to have the host dropped in their hand.
  - b. Each person must come up one at a time or as a family unit, maintaining 6 feet between each person.
  - c. Masks will continue to be worn by both the priest and the people.
  - d. After receiving the host, the person should step aside, 6 feet away from the clergy person, then remove their mask and consume the host or take the host back to their seat to consume it.
9. Clergy may also choose to go to the people in the pews.
  - a. To ensure people are 6 feet apart, there will likely be one or more empty pews between each person.
  - b. The clergy may walk in the empty pews in front of each person to distribute the host.
  - c. The person receiving the host would then wait until the clergy person has moved away from them to remove their mask and consume the host.

### **For Parishioners Sheltering in Place**

1. When possible, parishes shall livestream or record their services to be viewed online.
2. When appropriate, parishes may provide resources for their parishioners at home to assist their participation in the service.
  - a. Service bulletin
  - b. Prayer for Spiritual Communion
  - c. Lectionary readings
  - d. Prayers of the People and a means to submit petitions
3. When appropriate, Eucharistic Visitors may take communion to those unable to attend worship in person. (see Eucharistic Visitor Recommended Guidelines below)
4. The diocese will continue to offer online Sunday Common Worship for those who are unable to be in public and whose parish is unable to offer online worship.

## Building Considerations

1. Flush the water system if the building has not been in active use.
2. Open all faucets and taps and run the water for 5 minutes to flush the system.
3. Consider emptying and refilling the hot water heater.

## Facility Cleaning

1. Be aware of all spaces that have been used throughout the time together. Nave, narthex, hallway, restrooms, offices, sacristy, etc.
2. Thorough cleaning and disinfection are required before each service or meeting. Disinfection guidelines can be found at: [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html)
3. Cleaning should take place a minimum of 24 hours after a space has been used. The more time between a service and the cleaning of the space, the better. ***PPE including masks, gloves, and gowns should be provided for and worn by cleaning crew if cleaning is done in less than 24 hours following space use and as needed for cleaning chemical protection.***
4. ***If a parish wishes to use a space(s) in less than 24 hours a detailed plan shall be submitted to the Way Forward Task Force with information from a professional that verifies that the 2-3 air exchanges are made in the space prior to reuse. (V5)***
5. All surfaces that may have been touched by all those in attendance must be thoroughly cleaned.
6. It is recommended that each parish make a checklist of all the spaces that need to be cleaned each week.

## Pastoral Visits (V3)

1. *Safely providing pastoral care in these times is becoming more vital to the health of our parishioners and our parishes. (V3)*
2. *Therefore, pastoral visits may be conducted under the following conditions:*
  - a. *The visits will be scheduled, and screening questions will be asked and answered prior to the visit.*
  - b. ***The visit will be conducted with all participants masked and a minimum of 6-10 apart. (V5)***
  - c. *The visits will meet the Safeguarding Online™ recommendations for visibility.*
  - d. ***The visits will be a maximum of 30 minutes and conducted in the largest space possible. Recommend small rooms and offices be avoided at all costs. (V3/V5)***

- 3. 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. (V3)*

## **Home Communion**

Since there may be more people than usual who will request that communion be brought to their home, these guidelines are recommended as a way to make it possible for more people to receive the Eucharist and to minimize the contact between people in the process. Requests for Pastoral in-home visit will be addressed separately.

1. Each parish will recruit, as needed, several Lay Eucharistic Visitors (LEV) who are not at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19 to distribute communion to parishioners who are unable to attend public worship and who have requested to receive communion.
2. If the LEV has not served in this roll before, they should also receive all proper training that is needed to serve as a Eucharistic Visitor, and their names must be sent to the office of the Bishop for licensing and recording.
3. Clergy may choose to distribute communion to parishioner's homes if they are not at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19, but may want to reserve themselves for emergency pastoral care needs in order to cut down on their exposure and multiple contacts.
4. Each Eucharistic Visitor (EV) will be assigned 1-3 homes to visit.
5. They will be given:
  - a. An appropriate number of consecrated hosts.
  - b. A pix or other proper vessel for the consecrated hosts.
  - c. A face mask if needed.
2. The EV will contact the parishioners to arrange a time to come to the home.
3. It is recommended that the parishioners place a small table outside of the door they wish the EV to come to, and to place a bowl on the table for the EV to put the host in.
4. Once at the home, the EV will put on their mask.
5. They will place the appropriate number of hosts in the bowl provided.
6. They will knock/ring doorbell/call the parishioner to let them know they are there and remain 6 feet away from the door.
7. When the parishioner comes to the door, they will take the host from the bowl, proper prayers will be said by the EV and parishioner.



8. If there are multiple homes to visit, steps 7-11 will be repeated.
9. Once all visits are complete, bring the pix/vessel to the parish and cleanse with soap and water as directed.

### ***Outdoor Gatherings (V3)***

1. *Parishes may use these guidelines to celebrate Holy Communion. When communion is distributed, participants will observe all guidelines for worship inside. When communion is distributed, only the celebrant should move; everyone else will remain in place and wait for the celebrant to come to them. (V3)*
2. *Services where participants remain in cars and park in a designated parking area are allowed and are exempt from capacity limits. Participants will stay in their cars, will park a car-width from one another **car** (or every other space) and keep windows up. If communion is being distributed to cars, clergy and recipients must wear masks during that interaction. Restrooms should be used at home and parish restrooms shall not be made available. (V3/V4)*
3. *Outdoor spaces may be used more than once in a day. 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> (V3)*

## Section 3 – Additional Resources

1. Amid the Coronavirus Crisis, a Regimen for Re-entry: Health-care workers have been on the job throughout the pandemic. What can they teach us about the safest way to lift a lockdown? By Dr. Atul Gawande [www.newyorker.com/science/medical-dispatch/amid-the-coronavirus-crisis-a-regimen-for-reentry](http://www.newyorker.com/science/medical-dispatch/amid-the-coronavirus-crisis-a-regimen-for-reentry)
2. CDC references and other peer reviewed scientific literature were used as references in the development of Returning to Public Worship Guidelines for the Episcopal Diocese of Milwaukee.
3. Choral singing was identified as a high-risk activity.
  - a. CDC Choir Outbreak Report – Washington State 5/15/2020  
[www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/pdfs/mm6919e6-H.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/pdfs/mm6919e6-H.pdf)
  - b. Wisconsin Council of Churches Church Music in the Age of COVID-19:  
<https://www.wichurches.org/2020/05/08/church-music-covid19/>
  - c. ***The International Performing Arts Aerosol Study webpage, information, and updates. Note: Some refer to this as the “NFSA study, NFSHSA study, University of Colorado-Boulder Engineering study and University of MD Engineering Study; the U of Colorado/UMD National Association of Teachers Study” or by the names of the Study Chairs: Mark Spede and James Weber or Principal researchers Shelly Miller and Jelena Srebic.***  
<https://www.nfhs.org/articles/unprecedented-international-coalition-led-by-performing-arts-organizations-to-commission-covid-19-study/> (V5)
  - d. ***CDC, Short clear update on How COVID-19 Spreads, Oct 5, 2020;***  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-covid-spreads.html> (V5)
4. It is the consensus of the scientific and medical community that the lowest chance of transmitting respiratory illness will occur when the shortest amount of time is spent, by people spaced the furthest distance apart, ***snug fitting wearing masks (V5)*** in the most well ventilated space possible. Currently, there are no published peer reviewed scientific studies that have determined a precise time, distance, and rate of air flow in a space to prevent the spread of COVID -19.
5. Parishes considering UV disinfection or sanitizers, and cleaning devices that are being marketed, should read the CDC cleaning guidelines and the following documents **before entering into any agreement**. The peer reviewed published scientific evidence for UV light room sanitization is inconclusive to absent. No evidence is available.

- a. Microchem Laboratory: <http://microchemlab.com/test/uv-room-disinfection-devices>
  - b. ECRI review: [https://assets.ecri.org/PDF/COVID-19-Resource-Center/COVID-19-Clinical-Care/COVID-ECRI\\_HTA\\_Lytbot-Pulsed-Xenon-UV-System.pdf](https://assets.ecri.org/PDF/COVID-19-Resource-Center/COVID-19-Clinical-Care/COVID-ECRI_HTA_Lytbot-Pulsed-Xenon-UV-System.pdf)
  - c. ECRI review: [https://assets.ecri.org/PDF/COVID-19-Resource-Center/COVID-19-Clinical-Care/COVID-ECRI\\_HTA\\_Ultraviolet-Light-Air.pdf](https://assets.ecri.org/PDF/COVID-19-Resource-Center/COVID-19-Clinical-Care/COVID-ECRI_HTA_Ultraviolet-Light-Air.pdf)
  - d. The International Ultraviolet Association (IUVA) <http://www.iuva.org/IUVA-Fact-Sheet-on-UV-Disinfection-for-COVID-19>
6. Regarding the safety of the host in communication, currently there is no evidence to support transmission of COVID-19 associated with food. It is important that all participant always wash their hands or use hand sanitizer before preparing or eating food. <https://www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/newsletter/food-safety-and-Coronavirus.html>

*Version 2 - Italic (V2- June 17, 2020)*

*Version 3 - Italic (V3- July 16, 2020)*

*Version 4 – Italic (V4 – Sept. 10, 2020)*

***Version 5 – Italic (V5-Oct. 22, 2020)***

## Section 4 – Standard Guidelines

- Standard Guideline #1      [For Temporary Communion Under Special Circumstances – Walk-In](#) (10-22-20) – 3 pages
- Standard Guideline #2      [For General Visitation – Walk-In](#) (10-22-20) – 2 pages