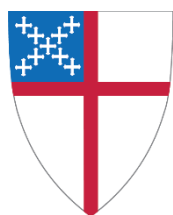


Returning to Public Worship Guidelines for the Episcopal Diocese of Milwaukee

from the Standing Committee and the Way Forward Task Force
2021 Revised Guidelines



COVID-19
Doing what love requires!



Introduction

As we implement and create future plans to resume reimagining our common life together as the Church, the following are requirements and recommendations set forth by the Standing Committee in direct coordination with the Way Forward Task Force. These are given to express Christ's and our love for each other spiritually, physically, and emotionally. We make our way through 2021 during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic hopeful that these guidelines, will enable us in our transition to safely regather in worship.

The guidelines have been updated through ongoing pastoral discernment; review and discussion of the published medical evidence: local and national medical and public health organization recommendations; local, state, and federal health authority guidelines and directives; as well as other diocese and faith community guidelines, practices, and recommendations. The Task Force also closely monitors the effects of the recently authorized vaccines and reports of viral variants. The Standing Committee closely monitors the overall well-being of the diocese and its parishes and assesses the overall risks associated with gathering. Future changes in return to worship guidelines will reflect changes during the pandemic, recommendations of the medical experts, and guidance from the Standing Committee.

These requirements and recommendations apply to all church activities and gatherings for worship including baptisms, weddings, visitations, and funerals. After reviewing the following guidelines, each congregation must prepare a plan for their parish's return to public worship. Public worship may begin once the parish has prepared the plan, local health department requirements are met, and the county case rate is in the corresponding range for the activity. The guidelines have Requirements and Recommendations. Requirements shall be incorporated into Parish Way Forward Plans and activities. Recommendations may be incorporated at the discretion of the Parish.

COVID-19 Principles

Medical researchers have determined that the COVID-19 virus is spread primarily through close contact with large respiratory droplets and smaller particles in the air (aerosols). Safe reopening and return to in person group worship and in-building group worship is dependent upon preventing continued spread of the COVID-19 virus and by the numbers of active COVID-19 cases measured in the community, by county in which the church is located.

Currently there is no group gathering that is 100% risk free. Risk of spread can be mitigated by size of gathering, location, use of masks, level of crowding, noise level, ventilation, and screening. The risk is lowest in a community with a low rate of active COVID-19 for small group gatherings of short duration, outdoors with properly masked and distanced individuals, and using normal speaking voice levels. Risk increases very rapidly when events are moved indoors.

The Task Force 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 practices and the CDC decision making tools for gatherings to parishioners and those who attend church functions.

The diocese assessment of risk for a gathering considers the rate of COVID-19 in the community and the following formulas:

- a. The Risk of becoming Infected with COVID-19 virus at a gathering = Exposure to Virus X Time (spent with contagious people and /or air containing the virus).
- b. The Risk of Outcome = Likelihood of catching COVID-19 X Consequences (infection, hospitalization, and death)

Medical experts report that all the authorized COVID-19 vaccines are highly effective at preventing death and severe illness. Less is known about their effectiveness at preventing spread of infection. Consequently, they have identified measures that must be **continued** to prevent COVID-19 spread until positive effects of vaccines are seen. These measures include:

- Masks worn over nose and mouth to prevent droplet and decrease aerosol transmission. Double masks (cloth and paper) are recommended by the CDC.
- Distancing 6 to 10 feet apart or more and limiting the amount of time spent close together in an enclosed space.
- Hygiene: handwashing, hand sanitizer, and cleaning high touch surfaces
- Screening to minimize exposure to active infection. Anyone who ill or has illness symptoms should stay at home.

The parish reopening process depends on how the virus affects our greater community and is subject to change. We must recognize the possibility that the gradual process of moving worship back indoors and increasing attendance may have to be reversed if COVID case counts worsen or an outbreak occurs in the congregation.

As of the date of this document, in the CDC, Considerations for Events and Gatherings; (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/large-events/considerations-for-events-gatherings.html>), they recommend:

“COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations, and deaths are extremely high across the United States. To decrease your chance of getting and spreading COVID-19, CDC recommends that you do not gather with people who do not live with you at this time. Attending events and gatherings increases your risk of getting and spreading COVID-19. Stay home to protect yourself and others from COVID-19.”

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Section 1 - Requirements

Gathering Criteria, Attendance, Safety Measures, and Screening for All Activities

1. General

- a. All gatherings require masks, a minimum of 6 to 10 feet of distance between individual or household groups, and screening unless otherwise specified. Gatherings indoors or outdoors shall be limited to less than 30 minutes.
- b. The final decision on changes in requirements for the diocese will be made in collaboration with the Way Forward Task Force, the Bishop/Standing Committee, and the parishes.
- c. The Diocese of Milwaukee Regathering Risk Assessment Dashboard (Dashboard) and published county limits will be used to determine the size of the gathering. The number may vary from county to county and from day to day.
- d. The number of people allowed is the Dashboard rating (which uses a general criterion that results an acceptable probability or less that a contagious person with COVID-19 could be present), your county's/community's health department restrictions, or the facility capacity with social distancing, whichever is smallest.

2. Attendance Criteria

The criteria for the number of people allowed will be the smallest number permitted by:

- a. Your local health departments, Wisconsin Department of Public Health and the Centers for Disease Control, **and**
- b. The Diocesan Dashboard found at:
<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1uv-7Dx4w1BDQSACf827iWCbflzMSirV2NFiDYosQwD8/edit?usp=sharing>

3. Dashboard Use:

Parishes are required to check the Dashboard periodically during the week and decide on conducting services 3-4 days prior to allow for notification.

The Dashboard assessment colors of counties can change daily; parishes need to check it periodically. If an assessment color worsens (i.e., changes from 'yellow' to 'red') 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. After that 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.

Please note that counties not in 'green' assessment incur a greater risk of having a person with a contagious case of COVID-19 present. Therefore, Clergy, Wardens, and Vestry member shall read the following CDC Guidelines as part of planning for any reopening event or gathering: CDC, Considerations for Events and Gatherings; <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/large-events/considerations-for-events-gatherings.html>

The following is the guidance for application of the Dashboard ratings:

- a. Under all ratings you may:
 - i. You may gather outside for worship with 10 or fewer people for graveside committal services, baptisms, weddings or funerals.
 - ii. You may make home communion visits.
 - iii. You may conduct services where participants drive into a designated parking area if no one gets out of a car.
 - iv. You may conduct services or events approved under a Standard Guideline #1 through #3.
 - v. You may gather indoors for a business meeting of five (5) people or less (smaller groups if local health departments require) for less than 30 minutes providing all Guideline requirements are met.
- b. If your county is 'red,' 'green,' or 'yellow' and you do NOT have an approved plan:
 - i. You may gather in your building solely to present to live-stream services.
Only those necessary to conduct the service can be present.
- c. If your county is 'red' and you have an approved plan or are approved for use of a Standard Guideline:
 - i. You may gather outside for worship with a capacity:
 1. 10 persons at the first gathering to test procedures (if you are restarting after a seasonal break, this is not required).
 2. At subsequent gatherings, the lesser of:
 - a. **Measured** capacity with social distancing in the space available.
 - b. The maximum number allowed by your local/county public health department.
 3. Note: See Outdoor gather requirements in paragraph 12 of this section.
 - ii. You may gather for worship indoors with the lesser of:
 1. 10 persons, counting everyone present in the same room.
 2. The maximum number allowed by your local/county public health department.

- b. Chronic kidney disease
 - c. COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease)
 - d. Down Syndrome
 - e. Heart conditions, such as heart failure, coronary artery disease, or cardiomyopathies
 - f. Immunocompromised state (weakened immune system) from solid organ transplant
 - g. Obesity (body mass index [BMI] of 30 kg/m² or higher but < 40 kg/m²)
 - h. Severe Obesity (BMI ≥ 40 kg/m²)
 - i. Pregnancy
 - j. Sickle cell disease
 - k. Smoking
 - l. Type 2 diabetes mellitus
2. These conditions are as of the date of this document and change as medical information is developed.

5. Attendance

- a. Each parish shall create a method to pre-register participants for any gatherings that have capacity limits. The parish determines the schedule of when people will attend services.
- b. The parish will have a plan to maintain a list of those who attended each service.
- c. 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.
- d. Clergy and vestry members will create a strategy for dealing with a potentially ill attendees and addressing behavior of non-compliant and defiant attendees.

6. Screening

- a. No one who is ill shall attend a church gathering or public worship.
- b. Each parish is required to ask screening questions of each attendee. Screening is done during pre-registration and verified prior to entry at the gathering or prior to entry.
- c. If anyone is ill or answers “yes” to one or more of these questions, they may not attend in person worship. Screening questions may be asked at the time of registration and confirmed prior to entrance. The current CDC symptom list is as of the date of this document. The current list is found at [Symptoms of Coronavirus | CDC](#)
 - i. Do you have any of the following symptoms?
 1. Fever and/or chills
 2. Cough
 3. Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 4. Fatigue

5. Muscle or body aches
 6. Headache
 7. New loss of taste or smell
 8. Sore throat
 9. Congestion or runny nose
 10. Nausea or vomiting
 11. Diarrhea
- ii. In the past two weeks have you had exposure to anyone diagnosed with COVID -19?
 - iii. Are you currently waiting for results of a COVID test?
- d. Note:**
- i. Temperature screening is not required or recommended unless required by your local health department.
 - ii. "Immunity Passports" will not be accepted.
 - iii. An individual showing proof of vaccination must still pass the screening questions and follow all mask and distancing requirements.
 - iv. A signed informed consent to attend worship or signed screening form is not required.
- e. Illness or Symptoms Identified During the Service:** If during a service, a person becomes ill or exhibits symptoms they should be isolated and follow the procedures in CDC Guidelines (see Section 3, 2.d.). The service will be suspended and future services in the space will be cancelled. The space shall remain empty a minimum of 24 hours before cleaning/disinfection.

7. Masks

- a. Snug fitting masks shall be worn by all over age 2, including during preparation and set up for all gatherings and services (vesting), pre-recording, videotaping, or livestreaming (if participants are not from the same household), outdoors, inside the church, and especially in poorly ventilated spaces.
- b. Masks will be available and offered to all attendees who do not have one.
- c. Mask exemptions will not be accepted.
- d. Masked celebrant/officiant using a microphone and normal voice volume is preferred over masked with loud, unassisted voice.
- e. No congregational or choral singing or wind instruments. Choir or ensemble rehearsals inside or outside the church building are not permitted.
- f. Consider double masks (cloth and paper) with the paper, medical procedure mask worn under the cloth mask and having both available.

8. Distancing

- a. A minimum of 6 to 10 feet of distance in all directions will be maintained between each Individual attendee or household unit.
- b. Parishes will identify entrances and exits to outside spaces and direct pedestrian traffic through the gathering space; mark 6-to-10-foot spaces as needed to prevent crowding and encourage one way pedestrian traffic flow (entrance is not the same place as exit).
- c. Measure and mark off pews, chairs, seating areas for indoor and outdoor gathering spaces to determine gathering capacity and maintain distance for each event or service.

9. Hygiene

- a. Have multiple bottles of antibacterial hand gel available at the entrance/exit doors, In each pew if able, near the altar.
- b. Have sanitizing wipes available to clean high touch areas and leave doors open to minimize touching of door handles.
- c. 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.**
- d. Gifts that are to be consecrated should be placed on the credence table or on the altar before the service.
- e. Remove hymnals, BCPs, reusable papers, pencils, etc. from pews.
- f. The peace shall be exchanged verbally only.
- g. Communion shall be distributed in one kind (bread only) unless specifically approved in a parish plan.

10. Ventilation

- a. Windows (unless sealed shut) and doors shall remain open for ventilation even in winter.
- b. Fans for ventilation are used only when there is adequate exhaust ventilation. Do not use fans in an unventilated space.
- c. Portable fans should only direct air out of a space through a window or door.
- d. Use fans to increase the effectiveness of open windows. Avoid placing fans in a way that could potentially cause contaminated air to flow directly from one person over another.

- e. Decrease occupancy in areas where outdoor ventilation cannot be increased. To safely achieve this, fan placement is important and will vary based on room configuration.
 - f. Ensure restroom exhaust fans are functional and operating at full capacity when the building is occupied.
 - g. Inspect and maintain local exhaust ventilation in areas such as kitchens, cooking areas, etc. Operate these systems any time these spaces are occupied. Consider operating these systems, even when the specific space is not occupied, to increase overall ventilation within the occupied building.
 - h. Consider running the HVAC system at maximum outside airflow for 2 hours before and after the building is occupied.
 - i. Ensure ventilation systems operate properly and provide acceptable indoor air quality for the current occupancy level for each space.
 - j. For detailed guidance regarding HVAC systems see [Ventilation in Buildings | CDC](#)
If indoor gatherings are not permitted, church restrooms should be used only if absolutely necessary during outdoor gathering. Fans that vent to the outdoors must be kept running.
- 11. Cleaning and Disinfection** – spaces should be treated as if a contagious, COVID-19 infected individual was present.
- a. Multiple services should not be held in the same space, on the same day.
 - b. Multiple services should be held in separate spaces using separate entrances, inside or outdoor, if held on the same day.
 - c. 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 and to protect against aerosol particles.
 - d. Clean High Touch areas (door handles, railings, light switches) often.
 - e. Follow cleaning and disinfection from the CDC in the following link: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html
 - f. 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. Use the following link: <https://wedc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/COVID-19-Outdoor-Gatherings-Guidelines.pdf>
 - g. Exceptions may be requested and granted on case by case-by-case basis, see paragraph 13.
- 12. Outdoor Gatherings**
- a. Outdoor gatherings, both for worship and for other purposes, are allowed 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.

- b. Parishes shall monitor local public health guidelines and the Dashboard to ensure that they remain in compliance as requirements are changing day-to-day.
 - i. If your local public health authority has not published a capacity limit for outside gatherings, use the capacity limit for the most recent State of Wisconsin Emergency Order(s).
 - ii. The most restrictive guidance from either the Dashboard or health department/state shall be used.
- c. **Parishes shall submit a plan showing actual measurements of the seating areas and 6-to-10-foot spaces between them, with a maximum capacity as part of the plan approval.**
- d. 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.
- e. If there is inclement weather the service must be cancelled or remain outdoors (if there is no lightning).
- f. In all cases, outdoor gatherings shall observe the following requirements from the Way Forward Guidelines:
 - i. 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/entrances and exits to maintain distancing and provide one-way movement.
 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.
 - ii. As participants arrive:
 1. Participants should be asked screening questions. It is preferred they be asked during pre-registration. Upon arrival:
 - a. Confirm that screening results have not changed.
 - b. Ask screening questions if they were not asked at registration.
 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 proceed to marked location where they will stand or sit.
 5. Attendance shall be taken and records maintained. All parishes will cooperate with public health authorities in any contact tracing investigations.

- iii. During the gathering:
 - 1. Parish buildings will not be available. Restroom may be used for emergencies provided exhaust fans are left running.
 - 2. Use electronic amplification (e.g., microphone, bullhorn). Participants shall not shout or raise voices.
 - 3. Recorded and instrumental music is encouraged. Singing and use of wind or brass instruments is prohibited.
 - 4. Children are not permitted to run around during the gathering.
 - iv. After the gathering:
 - 1. Participants exit maintaining social distancing.
 - 2. Participants should not linger to talk with one another following the gathering. Clergy will not greet participants individually as people leave gatherings.
 - g. 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.
 - h. Outdoor tents with sides or low tops are considered an indoor space.
13. **Exceptions:** Parishes may request an exception to the Guidelines for special circumstances. These will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Examples of possible exceptions are:
- a. Fund Raising or Community Events.
 - b. Allowing more frequent use of spaces based on HVAC system(s) modifications (supported by professional documentation).
 - i. These exceptions will require calculations determining the number of air exchanges between uses.
 - ii. Consult CDC reference Ventilation in Buildings, Updated Feb. 9, 2021; [Ventilation in Buildings | CDC](#) and American Society of Heating, Refrigerating, and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) recommendations referenced in the CDC document. (see Additional Resources, #4)
 - iii. Strongly consider getting assistance from an HVAC professional or engineer.
 - c. Blood drives and other community outreach events run by others.

Standard Guidelines

1. General:

Standard Guidelines were established to allow parishes to obtain approval for an activity or worship event by agreeing to follow the standard procedure for that event. The purpose is to reduce the administrative burden on the parishes. Request for approval

can be submitted by email. State the intention to use a Standard Guideline along with the necessary information concerning the worship or event as requested in that Guideline.

2. Standard Guidelines:

1) The following Standard Guidelines are in place:

- i. Standard Guideline #1 - For Temporary License for Communion Under Special Circumstances – Walk-Through
- ii. Standard Guideline #2 - For General Visitation – Walk-In/Drive-Through
- iii. Standard Guideline #3 - For Funeral Services – Graveside or Columbarium
- iv. Standard Guideline #4 – Return to In-person Worship Services.

3. Temporary License for Communion Under Special Circumstances – Walk-Through

- 1) 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.

4. Request for Use of a Standard Guideline

- 1) Requests for use of Standard Guidelines require only request to the diocese in an email to the Task Force with the information requested in the Standard Guideline.
- 2) The approval will be received by email only.

Section 2 - Recommendations

1. General Recommendations

- a. If, after reading the personal decision-making document, a person is concerned about whether they should attend public worship, they should consult with their health care provider.
- b. 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.
- c. Make the liturgy available with the following:
 - i. Print the service in bulletins and have a bin available to have them thrown away in and/or encourage people to take bulletins home.
 - ii. Create an online version that can be used on electronic devices.
 - iii. Encourage attendees to bring their own BCPs from home.

2. Should a Parish Choose the Liturgy for Holy Communion

- a. It is highly recommended that communion wafers be used rather than homemade bread.
- b. Only one member of the clergy will distribute communion.
- c. Celebrant should use antibacterial gel before and after consecration, and after distribution.
- d. If Deacon and/or other altar party is present, they all must remain 6 to 10 feet apart.
- e. When distributing communion, the host should be dropped in the hand of those receiving to avoid hand to hand contact.
- f. If hand to hand contact is made, the clergy person will use antibacterial gel before distributing to the next person.
- g. Parishes may create a schedule and safe process to allow people to come to the parish to receive communion that maintains the principles listed above for maintaining safe and healthy individuals and communities.
- h. If the congregation comes forward to receive communion:
 - i. 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.
 - ii. Each person must come up one at a time or as a family unit, maintaining 6 to 10 feet between each person.
 - iii. Masks will continue to be worn by both the priest and the people.
 - iv. After receiving the host, the person should step aside, 6 to 10 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.
- i. Clergy may also choose to go to the people in the pews.

- i. To ensure people are 6 to 10 feet apart, there will likely be one or more empty pews between each person.
- ii. The clergy may walk in the empty pews in front of each person to distribute the host.
- iii. 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.

3. For Parishioners Sheltering in Place

- a. When possible, parishes shall livestream or record their services to be viewed online. If this is not possible, a list of service offerings can be provided from the Diocesan website.
- b. When appropriate, parishes may provide resources for their parishioners at home to assist their participation in the service.
 - i. Service bulletin
 - ii. Prayer for Spiritual Communion
 - iii. Lectionary readings
 - iv. Prayers of the People and a means to submit petitions.
- c. When appropriate, Eucharistic Visitors may take communion to those unable to attend worship in person. (see Eucharistic Visitor Recommended Guidelines below)

4. Building Considerations for buildings that have not been used in several months.

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

5. Heating and Ventilation

- a. Church buildings and grounds leaders should become aware of how their heating and air condition (HVAC) systems function with respect to air exchanges and introducing outside air to the building.
- b. Many churches have either radiant heat (hot water or steam) that do not introduce outside air.
- c. Many churches have sealed stain glass window treatments that prevent opening of windows.
- d. Parishes that cannot introduce outside air into their buildings should:
 - i. Minimize the use of and time in spaces that are poorly ventilated due to sealed windows or heating systems.
 - ii. Reduce the number of occupants below what is allowed by the Dashboard and/or local health department requirements for indoor gatherings.
- e. Since modifications to heating and ventilating systems may result in significant costs for the modification and significantly higher operating costs, parishes should consider all life-cycle costs with a registered professional engineer before making a modification. See the Section 3 for additional resources for building

ventilation and cleaning resources before modifying systems or purchasing equipment.

6. Facility Cleaning

- a. Be aware of all spaces that have been used throughout the time together. Nave, narthex, hallway, restrooms, offices, sacristy, etc.
- b. Use the following link as a guide: <http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html>
- c. If a parish wishes to use a space(s) multiple times in less than 24 hours an Exception to the Guidelines shall be submitted to the Way Forward Task Force with information and air exchange calculations from a qualified professional/technician supporting the request. (See Requirements – Exceptions and Additional Resources #4)
- d. It is recommended that each parish make a checklist of all the spaces that need to be cleaned each week.

7. Pastoral Visits

- a. Safely providing pastoral care in these times is becoming more vital to the health of our parishioners and our parishes.
- b. Therefore, pastoral visits may be conducted under the following conditions:
 - i. The visits will be scheduled, and screening questions will be asked and answered prior to the visit.
 - ii. The visit will be conducted with all participants masked and a minimum of 6 to 10 feet apart.
 - iii. The visits will meet the Safeguarding Online™ recommendations for visibility.
- c. 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.
- d. At the discretion of the clergy, communion may be administered. Proper procedures for distribution and sanitation as outlined in the Guidelines shall be followed.

8. Home Communion with Lay Eucharistic Visitor(s)

- a. Since there may be more people than usual who will request that communion be brought to their home, these guidelines are recommended 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.
- b. 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.

- c. 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.
- d. 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.
- e. Each LEV should be assigned 1-3 homes to visit.
- f. They will be given:
 - i. An appropriate number of consecrated hosts.
 - ii. A pix or other proper vessel for the consecrated hosts.
 - iii. A face mask if needed.
- g. The LEV will contact the parishioners to arrange a time to come to the home.
- h. It is recommended that the parishioners place a small table outside of the door they wish the LEV to come to, and to place a bowl on the table for the EV to put the host in.
- i. Once at the home, the LEV will put on their mask.
- j. They will place the appropriate number of hosts in the bowl provided.
- k. They will knock/ring doorbell/call the parishioner to let them know they are there and remain 6 to 10 feet away from the door.
- l. 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.
- m. If there are multiple homes to visit, the steps will be repeated.
- n. Once all visits are complete, bring the pix/vessel to the parish and cleanse with soap and water as directed.

9. Outdoor Gatherings

- a. 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.
- b. 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.

Section 3 – Additional Resources

1. 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. References and COVID-19 related materials are located on the Diocese website at: <https://www.diomil.org/resources/covid-19-prevention-and-preparedness/>
2. CDC References specifically for personal and event decision making:
 - a. CDC, People at Increased Risk, And Other People Who Need to Take Extra Precautions, Updated Jan. 4, 2021; [Do I need to Take Extra Precautions Against COVID-19 | CDC](#)
 - a. CDC, Older Adults, At greater risk of requiring hospitalization or dying if diagnosed with COVID-19, Updated Dec. 13, 2020; [Older Adults and COVID-19 | CDC](#)
 - b. CDC, People with Certain Medical Conditions, Updated Feb. 3, 2021; [Certain Medical Conditions and Risk for Severe COVID-19 Illness | CDC](#)
 - d. **CDC, Considerations for Events and Gatherings, January 8 ,2021;** <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/large-events/considerations-for-events-gatherings.html> **(Required for Clergy/Vestry)**
3. 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 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.
4. The CDC reference for Building Heating, Air Conditioning and Ventilation (HVAC):
 - a. This reference should be consulted prior to initiating changes to HVAC system(s). Ventilation in Buildings, Updated Feb. 9, 2021; [Ventilation in Buildings | CDC](#)
 - b. If changes to HVAC system(s) are anticipated, it is recommended you consult with:
 - i. Minor adjustments and upgrades – Certified HVAC technician or contractor (Please note that HVAC technicians are not registered with or regulated by the state like other professions in Wisconsin).
 - ii. Major adjustments, equipment purchases, and upgrades – registered professional engineer with a specialty in HVAC systems.

5. Choral singing continues to be identified as a high-risk activity. Results of Studies investigating best practices to minimize risk in real life settings are not complete at this time. Here are some references to explain the ban on singing and wind instruments:
 - a. The International Performing Arts Aerosol Study webpage, information, and updates. <https://www.nfhs.org/articles/unprecedented-international-coalition-led-by-performing-arts-organizations-to-commission-covid-19-study/>
(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.)
6. CDC, Short clear update on How COVID-19 Spreads, Oct. 28, 2020; <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-covid-spreads.html>
7. Parishes considering HEPA air cleaning devices/systems and/or UV disinfection or sanitizers, and cleaning devices that are being marketed, should read the CDC Ventilation in Buildings section on these systems and CDC cleaning guidelines **before entering into any agreement**:
 - a. CDC, Ventilation in Buildings, Updated Feb. 9, 2021; [Ventilation in Buildings | CDC](#)
 - b. CDC Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces, Workplaces, Businesses, Schools, and Homes, Updated Jan. 5, 2021; (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/reopen-guidance.html>)

The peer reviewed published scientific evidence for UV light room sanitization varies by type of system and in some cases is inconclusive to absent.
8. 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>
9. The following are the criteria used for determining the color codes for the Diocese Risk Assessment Dashboard:

‘Green’ is less than 40 cases per 100,000 residents in a given county. This is the lowest and **desired risk category** for a gathering of 25 or less.

‘Yellow’ is between 40 cases and 120 cases per 100,000 residents in a given county. This is a **higher risk category** for a gathering of 25 or less. Consideration for greater than 10 foot spacing should be given.

'Red' is between 120 cases and 299 cases per 100,000 residents in a given county. The risk for **gatherings of 11 to 25 or more is unacceptable**. Indoor gatherings of up to 10 are acceptable but with a **higher risk**. Consideration for greater than 10 foot spacing should be given.

'Purple' is above 300 cases per 100,000 residents in a given county. **No indoor gatherings.**

Section 4 – Standard Guidelines

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| Standard Guideline #1 | For Temporary Communion Under Special Circumstances – Walk-In/Drive-Through – 3 pages |
| Standard Guideline #2 | For General Visitation – Walk-In Visitation – 2 pages |
| Standard Guideline #3 | Standard Guideline #3 - For Funeral Services – Graveside or Columbarium – 2 pages |
| Standard Guideline #4 | Return to Worship Services – 3 pages |