



**THE STANDING COMMITTEE**  
Episcopal Diocese of Milwaukee

24 March 2021 +Oscar Romero and the Martyrs of El Salvador

Dear Friends in Christ,

Two weeks ago we introduced some changes to the *Returning to Public Worship Guidelines*. These changes allowed parishes to begin holding small gatherings in their church buildings. We have discovered that these changes became a cause of frustration for some and confusion for others. We have been receiving communication from across the diocese indicating a firm desire for fewer restrictions and greater local decision making.

During these past nearly 14 months, we have all been making our way together as we live in the reality of pandemic. It is our hope that members of our diocese know that we have made the most responsible, prayerful, and mindful decisions that we could. We remain profoundly indebted to the Way Forward Task Force members for their careful, tireless and exacting work on our behalf.

After listening to you, and in consultation with our incoming provisional bishop (we would not want to make a change this close to his arrival if he would not support it), the Standing Committee is issuing the following resolution, effective immediately:

- Effective immediately, every parish in the Episcopal Diocese of Milwaukee will be able to hold indoor worship services at 25% of the capacity of the church. Parishes are expected to calculate the appropriate number to get to 25%.
- Parishes may opt to hold multiple worship services in one space in the same day, provided they have taken the necessary steps regarding ventilation and or HVAC to ensure the safety of all present.
- Parishes no longer need to contact the Way Forward Task Force and receive permission from the Standing Committee to hold worship services. The guidelines from the Way Forward Task Force are a valuable and trusted tool and are to be utilized by parishes when they make decisions about gathering safely.
- No parish is required to offer indoor worship at this time. Parishes are encouraged to take the appropriate time to plan for offering services safely before doing so.
- Our incoming provisional bishop, the Rt. Rev. Jeff Lee, is aware of and supports these changes. Bishop Lee is impressed by and thankful for the ministry of the Way Forward Task Force and plans to engage with the task force as soon as possible after his arrival on April 1, and looks forward to continuing to partner with its members as he begins his ministry with us.
- Unforeseen circumstances related to the pandemic may cause this policy to change.

We ask that any questions or concerns about this change be sent to members of the Standing Committee for consultation and clarification. May God continue to bless us as we seek to do God's will in our common life in this diocese.

Standing Committee, Diocese of Milwaukee