

November 20th, 2021

My Sisters and Brothers in Christ -

Two weeks ago, we asked everyone in the parish to share their views on the latest communique from the diocese concerning COVID-19. Essentially, we asked which of two scenarios would be MOST comfortable for you in terms of attending public worship at Holy Trinity.

The options were:

1. Carry on as we have been doing with no requirement to see proof of double vaccination for those who wish to come to join us. We would maintain all the protocols instituted by the diocese which include social distancing, masking and capacity limitations
2. Require proof of double vaccination and ID from everyone (including your priest) before they are welcomed home to our worship service. This proof would be required for EVERY SERVICE – once is not enough. By enacting this, “physical distancing is no longer required and limits on the number who can attend social events are also lifted and food and drink can be served. Masks are still required.” (from communique from Bishop Shane of October 27, 2021)

You have spoken and it would seem that we favour OPTION TWO. However, there will be several alterations to respond pastorally to those who have expressed concerns about this option. We want EVERYONE to feel safe and cared for, so here are the “protocols” we are setting for our own parish of Holy Trinity:

1. If you feel ill, please stay home.
2. Proof of double vaccination will be required at every service and gathering in the church building. We are not allowed to keep records of any kind concerning vaccinations, so you will be required to present proof and ID each time you join us for worship or any other function in the church building.
3. Masks will still be mandatory.
4. Upon entering, we would ask that everyone sanitize their hands at the door, self screen, register and then go to the next pew closest to the front of the nave. In this way, contact with others already seated will be kept to a minimum and thus the possibility of transmission minimized. The pews will be marked to show the safe social distancing.
5. While capacity limitations have been lifted, we ask that you still try to do everything possible to maintain social distance.
6. We suggest that people DO NOT congregate in the aisles before or after the service but find a place which is safe for you to visit, such as meeting in your pew if those around you have left. At the end of the service, following the dismissal, we suggest that people leave the church from the back pews first.
7. We will NOT gather for fellowship after service until the situation improves and ask that any social interaction take place OUTSIDE following the service.
8. We will maintain our practice of sharing only the bread at communion. The bread will be brought to you and we ask that you keep your mask on until you have had the bread placed in your hand and the priest has moved to the next pew. If you do not wish to receive, please place your hands across your chest and the priest will offer a blessing prayer.
9. We will implement this new protocol on Advent Sunday, November 28, 2021.

Our bottom line is twofold: to ensure the safety and comfort of ALL who wish to worship physically with us AND to create a safe space in which we gather in the Lord's name for strengthening and faith-building.

As we move forward, any and all reflections and concerns you might have on how we are doing would be greatly appreciated. Holy Trinity is US and every voice needs to be heard and responded to with compassion and Christian charity.

Yours in the Living Jesus,

Fr. Michael Kay Stanley Karen Talgoy