



CHURCH
OF THE
ASCENSION

Your Close Attention, Please: Easing Pandemic Restrictions

Updates from the Rector for Wednesday, June 2, 2021

Now what?

This is the third week that new/revised guidance has been provided to Ascension members with regard to pandemic restrictions. Worshipers are asked to review the changes already in place or pending by way of the letter from the Rector in today's newsletter (June 2) and the related pages of instruction provided for the past two weeks (following this page).

Even with all of the easing of restrictions, we are far from 'returning to normal.' Matters that seem simple from a distance and without involvement are often more complicated for those of us in the sanctuary, choir loft, parish offices and, newly, providing a new ministry by way of technology.

The matters noted below are among those under consideration but with regard to which we are not yet able to implement changes. If you feel you are able to actively participate in implementing change with regard to any of the matters below, please be in touch with me or other leaders. Thank you again for your attention, patience and help.

Fr. Patrick Raymond, Rector

Under continuing review in anticipation of further changes (partial list only):

- If/when to add a 2nd Sunday mass.
- Restoring Solemn High Masses.
- In-person coffee hours MAY be resumed subject to volunteer leadership and compliance with safe gathering and serving guidelines.
- Virtual coffee hours are phasing out. What can replace them for continued remote connections?
- Daily Office—@ Ascension or continued remote?
- Hearing Assistance Units—awaiting volunteer coordinator and training
- Sunday nursery care.
- Technology matters: volunteer help; what services to live-stream; remote lectors (or not).

Pandemic restriction updates will be posted weekly with the newsletter. Please keep informed.

Guidance previously provided may be found on the following pages. 



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Your Close Attention, Please: Easing Pandemic Restrictions

Updates from the Rector for Wednesday, May 26, 2021

Communion + Singing + Reading + Choir + Clergy + Lectors + Lay Ministers + Masks

A number of our pandemic restrictions and protocols are being or soon will be eased or eliminated due to evolving guidance from our diocese, city, state and the CDC. My thanks to the dozen clergy, staff and lay ministry leaders who continue to share with me in scrutinizing dozens of matters and who agreed to continue to collaborate with me in regard to these matters for our common good.

Of most importance for now:

- **Return to use of the Communion Rail, effective immediately.** Communicants are to briefly remove masks at the Communion Rail to consume the host (consecrated bread).
- **The Choir may include up to 8 vaccinated singers** for Trinity Sunday and Corpus Christi, subject to repertoire and choirmaster's discretion. (Consistent with past summer music rostering, we will normally have four singers on Sundays after Corpus Christi.)
- **Choir members, cantors and clergy who are vaccinated** may sing/chant and may do so unmasked. Those who prefer to remain masked may do so.
- **All in the pews, whether or not vaccinated, are to remain masked** for now, except when receiving the Sacrament. (We are exploring means to differentiate and provide separate guidance for vaccinated and unvaccinated worshipers in the pews.)
- **Ushers/greeters, whether or not vaccinated, are to remain masked**, in part to demonstrate the continued requirement for all who are seated in the pews.
- **People in the pews who are vaccinated and remain masked may sing.**
- **People in the pews who are unvaccinated are asked to refrain from singing.**
- **Vaccinated lectors, preachers, celebrants and lay altar ministers may be unmasked** when reading, preaching, presiding or otherwise serving at the altar.
- **Ministers in the sanctuary may remain unmasked but should **mask for concluding procession**** through the congregation and if/when greeting worshipers leaving the nave.

Under continuing review in anticipation of further changes (partial list only):

- If/when to add a 2nd Sunday mass.
- Restoring Solemn High Masses.
- In-person coffee hours **MAY** be resumed subject to volunteer leadership and compliance with safe gathering and serving guidelines.
- Virtual coffee hours are phasing out. What can replace them for continued remote connections?
- Daily Office—@ Ascension or continued remote?
- Hearing Assistance Units—awaiting volunteer coordinator and training
- Sunday nursery care.
- Technology matters: volunteer help; what services to live-stream; remote lectors (or not).

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Guidance provided last week may be found on the following page. 



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Your Close Attention, Please: Easing Pandemic Restrictions

Updates from the Rector for Wednesday, May 19, 2021

A number of our pandemic restrictions and protocols are being or soon will be eased or eliminated due to evolving guidance from our diocese, city, state and the CDC. My thanks to the dozen clergy, staff and lay ministry leaders who joined me via Zoom for 90 minutes yesterday to scrutinize dozens of matters and who agreed to continue to collaborate with me in regard to these matters for our common good.

Of most importance for now:

Pre-Registration for Sunday masses remains in place for now. As has been the case, walk-ins may join us subject to available spots and manual registration.

Mask requirements remain in place anywhere on Ascension premises.

Choir members will continue to sing live – complying with diocesan and CDC guidance, including limits on number of singers – and will also continue to pre-record some repertoire.

Eliminated for now: the circuitous entry through the garden and Wheeler Hall and temperature checks. All attendees will now enter, per tradition, through the LaSalle Street door into the vestibule and narthex.

Eliminated for now: Mandatory hand sanitizer prior to Communion. (Ushers will continue to offer it for those who want it.)

Eliminated for now: The priest's face shield. (Yea!)

Eliminated for now: The strict exiting directions and limitations (after the mass).

Eliminated for now: The intensive surface sanitizing measures. Thanks to those who faithfully served on the cleaning crew for our good and to cleaner/coordinator Carol Noren. They will no longer be scheduled after the end of May, although the thorough weekly cleaning normally done by our sexton and other cleaning personnel will continue.

Prayer Books will be returned to the pew racks (but not the Hymnals, for now).

Weekday parish office hours & 'business' are back to normal with some restrictions (e.g. masks).

Under continuing review in anticipation of further changes (partial list only):

- If/when to add a 2nd Sunday mass, and what form of it? When can we resume full Solemn High Mass? Return to the Communion Rail?
- In-person coffee hours MAY be resumed subject to volunteer leadership and compliance with safe gathering and serving guidelines.
- Virtual coffee hours may be eliminated due to low participation and little or no organization. What can replace it for continued and better remote connections?
- Daily Office—@ Ascension or continued remote?
- Hearing Assistance Units—awaiting volunteer coordinator and training
- Sunday nursery care.
- What about Corpus Christi?
- Technology matters: volunteer help; what services to live-stream; remote lectors (or not).
- When will we reintroduce the healing mass (traditionally on Saturday mornings)?

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