



Diocese of Buffalo Procedure Prior to Reopening Churches

This checklist of precautions necessary for the reopening of churches reflects the directives of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the New York Department of Health. These precautions are intended to keep all parishioners safe and to protect those most vulnerable to the novel coronavirus. We will communicate further as developments warrant. Thank you for your cooperation and patience.

1. Social distancing of at least six feet between members of different households will be maintained at all times —entering and leaving the church, seating, and the Communion procession. The parish has put in place floor or pew markings to help establish visual guides for distancing.
2. Appropriate cleaning of high-use areas within the church will be done before and after each liturgy. This includes pews, restroom facilities, door handles, push plates, and other areas of common contact.
3. Signage has been posted informing parishioners of the requirement of each member of the faithful over 2 years of age to wear a mask.
4. Parish staff and volunteers have been properly trained on new procedures and contingency plans have been formed, based on the number of volunteers available. The diocesan "Parish Playbook" has been reviewed and plans have been established for the reopening of the parish.
5. Ushers and other ministers of hospitality have been trained and will seat people as they arrive, starting in the front of the church and moving towards the back. They will assist in guiding and forming the Communion procession, and dismiss the congregation at the end of the liturgy from back to front at the end of Mass.
6. All who distribute Holy Communion will wear a mask and/or a face shield for the duration of the Communion Procession. Priests/deacons/members of vulnerable groups will not distribute Communion if they so choose, and an extraordinary minister will distribute communion instead.
7. All hymn books, missalettes, and other resources have been removed from pews and entry ways.
8. Holy Water fonts and stoops have been emptied. Sacristans/volunteers have been instructed not to fill them. (They may be covered.)
9. Hand sanitizer will be made available at the entry and/or throughout the church when possible.
10. Congregational singing will be temporarily discontinued. Soloist cantors and instrumental music will be more often employed, and no more than two cantors and an instrumentalist will be present at a liturgy and will also adhere to social distancing requirements and don masks.

The ten practices listed above have been implemented in my parish:

YES **ALL EXCEPT THOSE CIRCLED ABOVE**
(In Progress/Nearing Completion)

I attest that the precautions listed above have been/will be implemented, and that the parish of _____ will be ready to begin welcoming parishioners according to the directives of local health authorities and guidelines issued by the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, in concert with Bishop Edward Scharfenberger, Apostolic Administrator, and all directives from the Diocese of Buffalo.

Pastor/Parish Administrator