

Your COVID-19

FAQs

Question: Are printed parish bulletins problematic at this time, given that COVID-19 can last a fairly long time on paper?

Answer: Yes, if at all possible, we should encourage our parishioners to receive bulletins electronically. However, if this is not possible, bulletins can be distributed with a few of the following precautions:

1) Bulletins should not be handed out by hand in person but should rather be in a discrete place for a person to pick up themselves

2) Hand sanitizer should be available so that a person can sanitize their hands

BEFORE picking up a bulletin. But overall, physical bulletins are probably more work than they are worth at the moment.

Q. On the proper use of masks: what is the protocol if you choose to wear a mask during the church service when you are approaching the altar for Communion?

A. For the reception of Holy Communion, a person wearing a mask should wear it until they are ready to receive. The ideal situation is for the priest to go to the pews of the parishioners so that there is as little moving about by the parishioners as possible. If this is not possible, we must make sure to maintain social distancing (2m) while proceeding in the communion line. Nevertheless, the steps to receive will be the same.

1) Upon coming to the priest for Communion, the mask is removed. 2) The communicant receives as normal; the mask is put back on, and then the communicant goes back to their pew.

Q. Can we have Masses on Sunday with multiple groups within the worship space with distinct groups of 50, separated to prevent contact with other groups?

A. Yes, Masses can be celebrated with separate distinct groups (according to the number being allowed by the provincial government at that moment) within the same worship space at the same time, as long as prescribed social distancing procedures are followed. The policy from Manitoba is as follows:

Public gatherings of 50 people will be allowed indoors and 100 people outdoors, where members of the public are reasonably able to maintain a separation of at least two metres from others, except for brief exchanges. This change also applies to social gatherings, worship, weddings and funerals, as well as pow wows and other Indigenous cultural and spiritual events. **These**

gatherings must follow public health guidelines for the venue where they are being held.

Larger group sizes are allowed where distinct groups of 50 or 100 can be separated to prevent contact with other groups.

- Indoor gatherings are permitted with a maximum group size of 30 per cent of the site's capacity provided the group can be physically divided into sub-groups of 50 or fewer. *Each sub-group must be able to arrive, depart and participate in the gathering without co-mingling with members from any other sub-group.* Adequate physical distancing must continue to be provided for all participants. <https://www.gov.mb.ca/covid19/restoring/phase-three.html>

Given that at this time several sub-groups of 50 or fewer are permitted, and that up to 30 percent of the total capacity of the church in regular times, each parish needs to decide whether this is feasible for their church. In a small church, allowing two separate sub-groups will most likely not be possible. In a larger building, two, or even three separate sub-groups could be accommodated.

That said, a parish must ensure that no co-mingling between groups can occur.

Adequate physical distancing must continue to be provided for all participants.

Dedicated entrances could be established to maintain each sub-group's ability to arrive, depart and participate in the gathering without co-mingling with members from any other sub-group. Either that, or each sub-group would have to be given an established timeframe to enter and exit from the same door.

Sub-groups would also need dedicated washrooms.

It is therefore necessary for each parish to examine its ability to safely accommodate separate sub-groups.